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THE

WIDOWED BRIDE:

OR,

LAMIA.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE following Narrative is offered as the result of some reflection, and of some experience also, of the want of sound and deeply-seated religious principle in the education of the gifted few, who show, from early youth, the indications of a superior mind.

The most careful attention of parents is commonly directed to the slow and less excitable capacities of children, whose want of quickness is erroneously supposed to require more guidance, because, at a certain period, they have need of more tuition: while the

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precocious intellect of the forward boy, or sensitive girl, is left, it is thought safely, to their own responsibility on no better grounds than that "they are able to do anything they please, when they like it."

The unfortunate victims of such negligent education, are doubly to be excused for their faults, as well as pitied for the acute feelings of sorrow and remorse, with which they are sure to be, sooner or later, visited; when, the illusion of their youth having faded, seeking rest and finding none, the very talents and sensibility with which they have been endowed, become their most implacable tormentors.

No end can be more lamentable, than that of one who is then conscious, for the first time, of the hollow views of Science, and the deceitful colourings of Art, of the void of Rational Philosophy, as applied to the prospects of Immortality: whose mental weak-

ness is unsupported by Faith, whose physical sufferings are not alleviated by Resignation. This, alas! may occur to the finest and most cultivated, if not most regulated minds; to the best and most kindly natural dispositions, to which Philosophy and Letters, Art and Science, are but as snares, if unaccompanied by the Guardian Angel of Religion.

How frequently it happens, that the imagination, that earliest developed of all powers, is encouraged, to the neglect of sound moral training, and even a judicious secular learning! How many are those, who, in somewhat later years, think that they have made all necessary sacrifice in abandoning Poetry for Philosophy, Fancy for Instruction! They are benighted in that false light of a civilized and over-polished age, which confounds Mind with Soul, Reason with Morals, and worldly Wisdom with that higher Wisdom, that is not of this world.

To such there remains but one resource, dim, perhaps, yet true: the inward feeling of the wounded heart flying with Love, but also with holy fear, towards the mercies of its Maker. The heart, blind guide at first, may still be trusted at that hour, when Reason fails and Learning leads astray.

These simple principles are attempted to be exhibited in the present Tale: and it is sincerely hoped that such readers as are serious enough to look beneath the surface of a Novel — and the Author desires no others—will find their working satisfactorily exemplified in the

"CONFESSION OF LAMIA."

And as the moisture which the thinly Earth
Sucks from the Sea, to fill her empty veins,
From out her womb at last doth takea birth
And runs a Nymph along the grassy plains,

Long doth she stay, as loth to leave the land,
From whose soft side she first did issue make;
She tastes all places, turns to ev'ry hand,
Her flow'ry banks unwilling to forsake:

Yet Nature so her streams doth lead and carry,
As that her course doth make no final stay,
'Till she herself unto the ocean marry,
Within whose wat'ry bosom first she lay:

Ev'n so the Soul, which in this worldly mould
The Spirit of God doth secretly infuse,
Because at first she doth the earth behold,
And only this material world she views.

At first her mother Earth she holdeth dear,
And doth embrace the World and worldly things;
She flies close by the ground, and hovers here,
And mounts not up with her celestial wings:

Yet under Heav'n she cannot light on aught
That with her heav'nly nature doth agree;
She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
She cannot in this world contented be.

Then as a bee, which among weeds doth fall,
Which seem sweet flow'rs with lustre fresh and gay;
She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
But pleas'd with none, doth rise, and soar away:

So, when the soul finds here no true content,
And, like Noah's dove, can no sure footing take,
She doth return from whence she first was sent,
And flies to Him that first her wings did make.

SIR JOHN DAVIS.

LAMIA.

CHAPTER I.

"I sit in my grief; I wait for morning in my tears! Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead. Close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream: why should I stay behind? Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream of the sounding rock.

"When night comes on the hill; when the loud winds arise, my ghost shall stand in the blast, and mourn the death of my friends. The hunter shall hear from his booth, he shall fear, but love my voice! For sweet shall my voice be for my friends: pleasant were her friends to Colma!"—OSSIAN.

ON a fine autumnal evening in the year 18—, the sun was seen setting over the quiet village of Rainham in cloudless splendour,

while the rising moon, quickly succeeding to the station so lately quitted by the orb of day, illumined a scene of tranquil and domestic interest such as is seldom to be found near the more busy haunts of men.

Rainham is situated in the most picturesque, if not the most cultivated part of the county of Suffolk; formerly one of the great possessions of the Poynings family, it had passed by marriage and descent into a branch which bore the title of Lord Rainham, a name which will frequently occur in the course of the present history. As Lord of the Manor, the late Lord Rainham, who had died two years previously, had presented his nephew, the Reverend H. Lucy, to the living, and he had lately married and settled, apparently for life, in the cheerful but retired parsonage of Rainham.

It was Mr. Lucy's simple but happy home upon which the now brilliant moon shone forth in all her calm and kindly lustre, as if willing to lend a benevolent colouring to the picture upon which her rays were forming.

Seated at an open window, of a room that was the clergyman's study, was Mr. Lucy himself, thoughtfully gazing upon the beautiful scene before him—the peaceful village, the venerable spire, for which the Suffolk churches are celebrated, the fragrant garden newly and tastefully laid out by his own hands—yet thinking not exclusively of the happiness of his prospects, but rather of her who was to share them with him. As he mused, sometimes looking up to the blue vault, spangled with stars, sometimes to the church which was to be his principal care,

he would ever and anon turn to one who was standing by his side, and who, without uttering a word, seemed so thoroughly to partake his thoughts and feelings, as to prove that a state of heavenly circumstances might possibly exist in which neither speech nor language should be necessary to the perfect communion of hearts of the same quality in feeling and intelligence. Such an ethereal magnetism is hardly to be found on earth; but if it exists anywhere, it may be sought in the domestic companionship of the conscientious clergyman, and a wife worthy of him.

And she, the wife, was she worthy of him, worthy of her station? for the clergyman's wife has a station, which has its duties, and worthily do they fulfil them.

Her appearance was soft and pleasing, fair

and child-like in feature and complexion, earnest and thoughtful in expression: in which she was strongly contrasted with the dark and masculine character of her husband's countenance. He, evidently several years older than his wife, was endowed with a physiognomy rather handsome than prepossessing, rather grave than stern, which it might have been termed by those who had the misfortune to incur his displeasure. But his gravity as well as his calmness was the result of trials, experience, and above all, of his predominant virtue—self-control: his was a formed, a schooled character—his wife's a perfectly natural one; he had seen and learnt something of the world, she—nothing.

The Lucys had not been long settled at their new parsonage, before they began seriously to occupy themselves in all that con-

cerned the welfare of their parish. The simple distribution of charity in the shape of money is so easy to those that have it, that its merit sinks to a low point indeed compared with that of those who give their time, their care, their talents, to the wants, physical and moral, of the poor. To deny all merit to those who dispense willingly of their fortune, would be absurd, for in many cases money is the thing most needed, where trouble, however willingly bestowed, would do nothing. And great and noble objects of charity may be well accomplished by a sum of money, which, if indiscriminately given in what is called charity, would be as water added to the ocean. Yet the clergyman's morning walk among his poor, whose character he studies, whose wants he knows, whom he assists by his advice, and

fortifies with his discourse, is worth more than the rich man's guinea, given to importunity, and forgotten as soon as given.

The usual discussions between Lucy and his wife, fell upon their means of improving their parish, particularly with regard to education, in which country parishes are so frequently deficient. A secret cause added to the earnestness with which Mrs. Lucy endeavoured to make herself mistress of the whole theory and principles of the education of children, both as to talent and character, so often overlooked by fond and indulgent parents. She had early prospects of becoming a mother, and the fairy dreams of future domestic happiness, the education of her children from playful childhood till the age of promise, visions of their growth, talents, improvement, and perhaps celebrity,

to the time when they might become the props of their parents' declining age; these, alas! too often deceitful reveries, were now the constant pictures of her mind. Sometimes, indeed, they would be clouded by a conscious shudder at the many chances and accidents of infancy and youth; for Emma Lucy was far too sensible not to be aware that the most blessed home and family is not always exactly like a day-dream—that illness, singularity of temper, slowness of capacity, may thwart the views of the most careful mother, and that even should her whole flock of children turn out quite perfect, her own health and other worldly circumstances might interfere to prevent the completion of that happiness she looked forward to. But who for that would willingly check or dim the bright vision of the young mother?

It was the constant practice of Henry Lucy to direct the reading and studies of his wife, and to finish, as it were, the formation of her character, that last but not least part of education, by inducing her to take up his own favourite books, and by commenting and illustrating their subjects in such a manner as to draw her attention to rather a deeper cast of reading than is commonly acceptable to women.

They had been engaged, a few minutes before the time at which this narrative begins, in reading that most beautiful part of Milton, the first part of the Fifth Book of Paradise Lost—comprehending Eve's dream and the following passages. He had been explaining to her the inimitable beauty of the poetry, if considered only with regard to its singularly well-chosen words and forms

of expression, the musical rhythm of the lines, and the faultless taste in which Eve's presentiment of evil is disclosed in the purest simplicity of language. Her yet innocent mind could not be better contrasted with the impending shadow of crime. This purity of diction, this perfect justness of expression, this delicacy of taste in the choice of words which are to transfuse the soul of the poet into that of the reader, seems to have been caught by Milton from the Italian poets. Among them, indeed, it often degenerates into verbal niceties and conceits, which the stronger mind and character of Milton, and of his native tongue have conspired to avoid.

Henry Lucy had finished his observations, and both he and his wife were, whilst inspired with this most sublime production of

sacred poetry, naturally led to contemplate the sublimest work of the Creator—a star-bespangled sky. Just then a comet, for whose predicted arrival they had both been some days watching, in celestial splendour emerged from behind a light cloud, and seemed to cast its downward beams upon the head of Emma Lucy, as she stepped lightly on the turf to take a broader gaze at the heavens. There is nothing that expands the mind to ideas of greatness and omnipotence more than the survey of the heavens in the field, or even the study of astronomy in the closet; the comparison between what we then contemplate, and any conceivable object within our grasp in this world, shows so completely and convincingly the utter smallness of us and our concerns, that they lead the most unwilling observer to acknowledge

that there must be things greater than himself in heaven, before whom man and his works stand powerless and contemptible.

Such were the thoughts that passed through the minds of the pious couple, as they slowly crossed their modest lawn, and inhaled the perfume of the jasmine and honeysuckle that covered their little veranda. But on one side, perhaps, these thoughts went deeper than on the other.

Emma Lucy, without being at all superstitious, was decidedly poetical; which quality, in some constitutions, goes a step or two towards the other. In her own family, she had been called romantic; which character, if limited to her thoughts, or extended occasionally to her words—not to her deeds—she in some measure deserved. Perhaps, at the present moment, she was

more anxious to see into futurity than ever she had been; and had she been her own mistress, and some pretended foreteller of events near, she might have yielded to the temptation of consulting him. But she was married, and prudent.

She was deeply struck with the strange analogy to human life, which, with regard to comets, seems to have suggested itself to the thinking part of mankind, in all countries and ages. The certain prediction (within limits) of their appearance within our sphere; their rapid, beautiful, and transient course; their equally apparent rapid dissolution, or at least vanishing into regions far beyond our ken, to reappear at some future day: all these points of resemblance between the comet's heavenly career and that of man upon earth, made a strong impression

upon her imagination. She fancied she saw what had led mankind to attach the apparition of a comet to the fate and life of individuals; and though History speaks only of the great and powerful as subject to their influence; yet a leaning to this persuasion, in a mind constituted like Emma's, was enough to fill her with serious thoughts, and to sink her spirits perceptibly.

Her husband chid her gently for her unwonted gravity, and inquired the cause.

"I cannot," said she, "get over the appearance of that comet. Not that I consider myself of sufficient importance to be any way concerned in its mysterious message, whatever that may be; but I have seen it; it has raised thoughts of awe and dread within my breast; and those thoughts, though excited by a casual, yet sublime sight,

appear to me to be sent on purpose. When God so forcibly calls our thoughts to heaven, it is to make us think how soon we may, or may not, be there." And she wept.

Henry kissed the tears from her eyes, and for once was at a loss how to reply. He would not check religious feeling in any one, but he saw that her sensitive nature was not in a state to be coldly or drily reasoned with, and wisely resolved that his affection should sustain her spirits, and his reason her understanding.

On their return to the house, they found it so much later than they had imagined, that Emma reminded her husband of the hour for family prayers, for which their little household were regularly assembled at eleven o'clock. This duty, now universally performed in clerical families, and in many

others, was not so general a few years back, during the youth of Mr. Lucy, as it has since become; and he was indebted to the pious mind and religious education of Emma for the regular and never-failing observance of it. Their domestics, two maids and a boy, entered the room, and, kneeling round the same table as their master and mistress, profited by their good example in rendering their nightly devotions to heaven.

On Sunday nights, this interesting family service was varied by the addition of a very short sermon, or a page or two of moral teaching selected by Mr. Lucy.

The servants had not left the room five minutes, when one of the maids returned, and said:

"A messenger, Sir, is come from the Abbey, to say that Lady Rainham is ill, and

desires to see you as soon as you can come to her."

Such a message to Henry Lucy, whose heart was always open to the call of his parishioners, was sure to be instantly attended to. He turned, with an air of distress and agitation, to his wife, saying to her:

"This is urgent, my dear; go to rest, and think not of my being out for so short a distance on this fine summer night." He quickly took his hat and departed, not without a hasty but sympathetic kiss from Emma. She, however, quickly collected her thoughts, and retired to her apartment.

The arrangements of a country parsonage do not commonly offer much for observation or description, but the taste and education of Emma Lucy made this an exception, In a little bay-window stood a small work-table,

on which was usually to be seen a vase, filled with flowers, a few books of rather a serious or poetical cast, and the little memoranda relating to her village school, and the other useful parts of a clergyman's parish duty. In all these she was the true helpmate of her husband, upon whom, as well as on them, she never failed to pray God's blessing, before she sought her snow-white pillow; and on the present occasion it was not omitted. She took a last look from her lattice-window over the dewy garden, sparkling under the brilliant harvest-moon, and redolent of the fragrance of honeysuckles, and other climbing plants, which covered the house; and closing

turned towards a little cradle, and some other things, carefully placed near her bedside, and paused, gazing thoughtfully at them. Thoughtful, indeed, she was, but happy: her

tranquil slumbers were as the repose of the blessed. A few of her own sketches, and copies from old masters, adorned the walls of her chamber; amongst which was Raphael's heavenly Madonna and Child, with the little bird; on this divine image of innocence and holy love her eyes involuntarily rested; it was the last object on which her mind dwelt, waking: the first that her fancy presented to it, sleeping.

Meanwhile, Henry had soon crossed the park, into which there was a gate opening upon the rectory, and by an easy path of half a mile, found himself before the porch of Rainham Abbey. Finely thrown out in all its picturesque irregularity, by the sharp chiaroscuro of the moonlight, he stopped a moment to admire the scene, though oft ad-

mired before; when, recollecting his business, he rang the bell, and entered.

There is nothing that tends so completely to unite the past with the present, as the reflections that arise from the contemplation of the relics, or the monuments of ages long gone by. Of all such monuments, an ancient building, whether it be church or castle, college or manor-house, is perhaps that which speaks most powerfully to the imagination. This arises from the natural association of the place with those who have planned, built, inhabited, and made use of those very walls which now shelter their descendants, or contain the altar at which so many generations have knelt and prayed. A feeling of community with those no longer on this earth, but who have borne the same names, spoken

the same tongue, and enjoyed the same pleasant scenes or animating sports, as ourselves, calls up feelings of affection and reverence in some places, of awe and respect in others, which may be termed superstition by the philosopher, or dotage by the politician; but which is nevertheless akin, near akin, to some of the best feelings of our nature. Such are the real traditions of a country, the best legacies of the middle ages, which preserve the spirit and form without hindering the growth or development of the substance. In no country are the materials of such traditionary feeling more profoundly marked than in England; nowhere have they produced such good fruit, or so favourably coloured the national character. And in no part of England is this more the case than in the

East Anglian counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

Rainham Abbey was a fine specimen of the Elizabethan or Tudor age, and possessed all the advantages of those highly picturesque and stately buildings. Slightly discoloured by the venerable effects of time, but quite perfect in its outline, and little damaged in its details, it gave an excellent example of the old English manor-house. Most truly are they English, for the same are not seen among the castellated habitations of feudal times in Scotland, Ireland, or the continent, where force and rapine long prevailed, since security or the security of plunder were there the main object, while in England, gradual civilization, and knightly, and even courtly splendour have kept pace with feudal independence.

On entering the spacious porch, the way led first into a corridor, on the left hand of which two arched doors, opening in a richly ornamented oak wainscot, supporting what in olden times had been a music gallery, gave access to a vast and lofty baronial hall, so placed between two principal courts of the building as to allow of being lighted on both sides by lofty stone windows, blazoned with arms and family devices.

After mounting two or three steps, at the end of the hall, and passing a delicately carved oriel window, enriched with the Rainham Arms, and York and Lancaster Roses, a square recess made way for a corner staircase, enclosed in a turret, going up to the top of the house, communicating with a formerly splendid, but now neglected, state apartment ranging nearly all round the building. The

present inhabitants now lived chiefly on the ground-floor.

To arrive at this, it was necessary to pass through a small door on the opposite side of the hall, which opened into one of those irregular, unaccountable spaces, to be found in all old houses: a sort of passage-lobby, the use of which, as originally intended, it was impossible to divine. Ill-lighted by a lancet-window, irregularly broken by a step down, and two steps up, in the middle, with a crooked wall, and an angular recess in the centre of it, a rough brick pavement, and an old door or two stopped up, this was the present vestibule to the inhabited part of the Abbey. It joined a cross-gallery, out of which the doors into the suite of lower rooms opened; and at the very extremity of these lower rooms was the apartment inhabited by Baroness Rainham.

It is a singular characteristic of the English mind that, with few exceptions, our travellers of all ranks, no matter with what tastes or objects they visit foreign countries, preserve an innate desire to end their days at home. Hence it is often seen that the rich and luxurious, who spend more than half their lives in vain pursuits, or in restless ramblings over France and Italy, and even more distant climes, have constantly in view some future time when they look forward to passing some quiet years in their own country. This feeling it is that enriches so many of our manor-houses with the spoils of antiquity, or the gems of modern art; which adorns our Gothic halls with that pleasing variety of Italian paintings, Grecian sculpture, antiques of every classic land, and the more

grotesque, but rich adornings of Africa or the East.

Surrounded by such luxuries, not the effeminate luxuries of enjoyment so much as those of a refined taste, lived the Baroness Rainham, to whose private apartment Henry Lucy was now admitted, by her favourite and confidential maid, Valérie Vauban. At the door of the antechamber stood an Arab page in the picturesque dress of his country, certainly incongruous to his present situation, but not the less striking, as he stood under the light of an alabaster lamp suspended above his head. This antechamber itself was an ancient wainscoted room, ornamented with rich oak carvings, and a ceiling whose beams had once been splendidly gilt. On the walls hung two or three modern pictures

which suddenly arrested Henry's attention. The largest of these was a remarkably fine view of Venice which had been a favourite sojourn of Baroness Rainham—the next was a group of two beautiful children, sisters, at play upon a verdant lawn shaded by old oaks, the scene of which could be nowhere but in England; and the third was covered by a veil, which Henry paused before he ventured to draw aside. Nevertheless, after a moment's hesitation, he lifts the veil and gazes with strong emotion upon the portrait of a beautiful young lady, fair as an angel, but with a grave and serious expression of countenance, befitting perhaps more the angelic than the mortal nature. She was represented as about seventeen, habited in a rather antiquated dress of white satin, her fair hair braided with pearls, and a fan of

peacock's feathers in her hand. It was doubtless a beautiful portrait of an equally beautiful subject.

After a transient glance Henry closed the veil, and proceeded to the inner-chamber.

Lamia, Baroness Rainham, was a tall, handsome woman of thirty, of pale rather than fair complexion, set off by deep black hair and eyebrows, such as are seldom seen in Britain. Her deep-set eyes and jetty eyelashes, contrasted with the whiteness of her skin; and the drawn, extenuated look of her features, and of her marble hands, bore witness to long-continued suffering, as well as to previous conflict of mind and passion. Stretched on her couch, the once graceful form scarcely moved, and the pale lips seemed incapable of utterance.

On seeing the lamentable state to which

his once beautiful cousin was reduced, Henry was deeply affected; but feeling that it was necessary to overcome every sign of emotion, he made a strong effort, and approached her sofa.

" I am here, Lamia, dear Lamia," said he, and was again silent.

At the sound of his voice, the poor sufferer turned and fixed her still bright but feverish eyes upon his face, and with an almost convulsive struggle replied, in a broken voice: " Henry!"

Even this slight effort was nearly too much for her, and her watchful attendant Valérie, and the physician, Dr. Schuler, who had till now been unobserved by Henry, stepped forward and offered some cordial to the exhausted patient. Her marble face, shaded with ebon tresses, which hung in

disorder over her shoulders, seemed to regain a transient colour, and being carefully raised upon her bed, she essayed once more to speak in scarcely living accents to her deeply affected cousin.

" Henry," she said, " you see me once more, but how do you see me? not as formerly, the gay, the admired, the spoilt child of fortune and the world, but the unhappy, the dying—" and her voice trembled— " shadow of what I once was. O, Henry! it is terrible to think of death—it is terrible even to think of life as I now think of it, and have known it. I hardly know whether to rejoice at having reached home, a home that has so many, many recollections I would wish to efface. It seems as if in death I have all I once loved—now I love nothing—and retain all I hate, all that hates me.

Love me? none love me. I am no longer fit for this world, still less fit for another."

An hysterical seizure put an end to this distressing scene, and Henry was preparing to withdraw, when Valérie whispering that she knew her mistress, who was now in a state of torpor, had more to say as soon as she was able, entreated him to remain.

After a considerable interval of rest, if rest it might be called, which rest was none, the troubled spirit beckoned him again to her side, and with surprising calmness, the result rather of weakness than of self-possession, said:

"Henry, I am better now, I feel I shall be able to say more to-morrow; Dr. Schuler shall call on you in the morning, and tell you when he would advise you to come. Come to me every day, while I am ill; it

will not be a long task that I exact of you."

Symptoms of agitation reappearing on the countenance of the patient, the two attendants motioned Henry to retire, which Lamia perceiving, and not objecting to, for she was truly exhausted, let him depart without other notice, than fixing her wild eyes upon him as he withdrew.

With heavy heart he left that ancient hall, conducted by the Arab page to the porch, when he once more stepped out into the verdant park, beneath the placid moon, which shone, unconscious of the woe within. A rapid walk once more brought Henry to his own door, or rather as his heart then more loudly pronounced it, his happy home; blessing Heaven for the contrast it presented to the scene he had so lately quitted.

Late the next morning, he met his amiable wife, at their cheerful breakfast-table, where Emma, fresh from sleep and blooming as a rose, could not refrain from observing the pale and anxious looks of her husband. In answer to her very natural inquiries, he said:

"I had a painful duty to perform last night; my visit to my cousin has recalled many feelings of younger days, and has, I confess, oppressed my spirits. I will, at another time, more explicitly account for it. At present, dear Emma, follow your accustomed occupations; I must wait at home for the report I expect of poor Lamia's condition this morning."

He then briefly related the pitiable state in which he had found her, and went to his study animated with the desire of arranging some plan of discourse with his cousin,

should she be able to bear it, which might prove serviceable to her in the evidently distressed state of mind to which she was reduced.

We will not follow Emma through her morning's walk; suffice it to say, that after a visit to some poor, sick families, and to others who, though not sick, were equally pleased to be noticed by the Rector's wife, she ended, as usual, with that which was her favourite and perhaps most useful charge, the village school. She felt that it was a part of her duties that she best understood, and she wished particularly to become acquainted with the female population of a parish in which she expected to pass all her life, with a view of knowing their characters and inspiring them with confidence at any future period. None but those who have

witnessed such scenes, can tell at how small an expense of gifts, of trouble, of time, or even of money, the young may be encouraged, the middle-aged pleased, and the old comforted; nor how much better the task is performed, unless in extraordinary cases, by the clergyman's wife than by the clergyman himself. Half the parishioners must be women, and an additional proportion children of either sex, all of whom come more naturally under the care of a woman than of a man: and it is in this, perhaps, that the excellence of our parochial system may best be proved, and its superiority to the celibacy of other Churches. For even granting that there is something more noble, more saint-like, more exclusively devoted to religion as an abstraction, in the anti-matrimonial law of the Roman Church; allowing, for argument's

sake, that in spite of its evils as a general rule, the individual priest stands higher as an insulated being, wholly devoted to the loftiest idea of his Church as the grandest and most heroic form of Christianity: yet it would be wholly and entirely impossible to lay the simple, modest virtues of the parson's wife under ban, or to prove that her sphere of active charity, guided by the pure light of the Gospel, can be repugnant to our religion. Exalt the principle of the celibacy of the clergy as you will, the practice of the clergyman's wife is there as a triumphant refutation of your false and untenable position.

CHAPTER II.

"What is the cause that unbelief doth so strongly put forth itself? The inevidence of the object of faith: that is, when things are clearly brought to the understanding, but, through its weakness, it is not able to see the reason of them. The object is clear, but the mind is dark.

"You think too meanly of God, when you think He hath much ado to forgive. He expects your acknowledgment and repentance, and then you are friends."

THE DESERTED SOUL'S CASE AND CURE.

MEANWHILE, Henry was anxiously and painfully arming himself with such materials as a small but well-chosen library of divinity

and the resources of a sound and cultivated understanding would give him for the conversation which he foresaw must soon take place between himself and his cousin. He knew well how difficult it is to convince those whose bias or previous habits of thought indispose them to religious meditation. Henry knew that minds in such a state of obscurity and depression must be approached with care, and as he was deeply interested in the condition of his cousin, he took the determination to sound her present feelings without delay.

While he was thus meditating, a messenger from Rainham brought him a note from Dr. Schuler, giving a favourable account of his patient, and stating her willingness to see him as soon as possible. Henry immediately repaired to the Abbey.

On reaching Lamia's apartment, he found that she had been removed to a more cheerful room, opening from that in which he had last seen her, and looking upon a small enclosed garden, into which a glass door gave admission. Upon a paved terrace, in front of the windows, stood some fine orange-trees, whose flowers spread a delicious perfume through the rooms. Some antique vases, filled with scarlet geraniums, stood between them; and clusters of roses hung before the ancient casements, and half concealed the light. Some small pieces of stained glass, a Madonna's head, a St. Margaret, and the arms of Rainham still ornamented these Gothic windows; while a corner-turret hung with luxuriant ivy, a venerable witness to the age of the time-honoured fabric, closed the garden on one side.

Near the door, reclining on a couch, from which she could have a view of the garden and enjoy the Oriental luxury of flowers and perfumes in which she seemed to delight, lay Lamia, unaltered in appearance from what she was the night before, but calmer and more subdued in expression.

After greeting her cousin, she said: "You find me still ill, still wretched, but prepared to converse with you, if not in your own manner, at least in that which the study of philosophy and some experience of the world have taught me. Ah, listen to me," she cried, with more earnestness, "mine is no transient flash of incredulity, prompted by the sneer of ridicule or by the wit of atheists. I have deeply studied and reflected on the very nothingness of this world, and am for that reason persuaded that I myself am nothing

also—and to nothing shall return. Tell me not of the beauty of religion, of a system you have made for yourselves, ye interested people. Tell me not of feelings, of virtues, of loves, of hopes and fears to which I find no echo in my own mind, I heed them not; I hope not, neither do I fear."

While the words were on her lips, spoken with increased effort, which was gradually approaching a vehemence at which Henry was alarmed, her colour became more deadly pale, and she trembled.

"Yes," she said; "I do fear—coward that I am—I fear I know not what, and that drives me to madness!"

"Be calm, Lamia," said Henry, greatly shocked. "Let us reserve these discussions for a calmer moment."

Lamia remained silent, but her eyes gave token of the conflict within.

"Oh!" said she; "I have suffered. Pardon my violence, for the tortures I endure, and which I cannot much longer bear, have made me take the most compendious way of curing them. There is but one cure for the wretched. I know it. I have it. Ha!"

Her eyes glanced suddenly at a phial, which Dr. Schuler hastily removed, saying:

"You have had too much of this—be quiet!"

Henry was struck with the decided tone of the physician, which made him suspect that Lamia's state of mind was such as to require control, and he was not less surprised to see the air of subjection with which she submitted to it. He resolved to have some private conver-

sation with him. Henry accordingly stepped out upon the terrace, whither he was soon followed by Dr. Schuler.

The Doctor was a grave, but rather pedantic specimen of the foreign style of medical man. His quick eye, and very decided manner, showed that he had talent, while his desire to convince his listeners of his learning upon all subjects, rather took off from the effect of that which he really possessed. He was an M.D. of the University of Prague, and had imbibed strong national prejudices, which, together with a philosophical turn in matters of religion and politics, had contributed to make travelling more agreeable to him than staying at home, exposed to the vexations of German police.

Whether Lamia's ideas, which always had a tendency to expatiate in the vague mazes of

philosophy, to sound the unfathomable, and to penetrate the unknown, had benefitted by the Doctor's conversation, as much as her malady had been alleviated by his skill, is a question which may admit of doubt. Such, however, was Dr. Schuler, and it was to him alone that Henry could make any observation upon the sad condition of his cousin, to whom his care and attention had indeed been unremitting.

The Doctor began by remarking:

"I fear, Sir, you find a great change in the appearance of Lady Rainham since her departure from England. It is, indeed, my duty to tell you, as her near relation, that her last state is every way deplorable, and her mind, acute and quick-sighted as it is, begins to yield, not from weakness, but from being fatigued, and worn out with suffering. Some causes of

mental disquiet there seem to be, of which, of course, I know nothing, that evidently aggravate the disorder; but when the human frame, from repeated shocks of pain and spasm, and, at last, from nervous fear and apprehension of such attacks—even when they do not actually come on—loses the power of recruiting its strength, from rest, sleep, food, or medicine, there is but one end to look for, be it sooner or later."

Henry was deeply moved at hearing, from such authority, that there was nothing to hope for his cousin, but recovering himself, asked if she had never tried the mysterious remedies of mesmerism, of homœopathy, or hydropathy?

"Alas! yes," replied the Doctor, "her sufferings have led her to try everything, with or without advice; I, as you may suppose,

have studied and practised all the German methods, and, after much experience, I come to the conclusion that they are all true, all equally founded on the immutable principles of Nature, and intended by that universal mother for the benefit and advantage of her children. But if you ask me why we do not better succeed, why we so often fail, I tell you, we know nothing of these principles beyond their existence, and in all but the empirical part of our profession, we are but quacks; philosophical, if you please, but still quacks.

"Her Ladyship having tried all these methods, at last took to chloroform, and was so much pleased at the cessation of pain she experienced from it, that she would speedily have annihilated her existence, had I not peremptorily forbidden it. She has since

returned to the copious use of opium, which alternately raises and depresses her spirits, till either way they are beyond control, and, Sir, it is sad to see how that brilliant wit and imagination, that acute perception, with which she is naturally gifted, are gradually dimmed by its use. I must allow her either stimulus or sedative: she would prefer, because it interests her mind in a philosophical point of view, some more scientific and mysterious treatment, such as the supernatural witcheries of mesmerism, or the minutely material action of homœopathy; but I think opium the least active, and therefore the less hurtful, but it is her ruin, and will, ere long, bring her pain to an eternal cessation."

At this moment they were interrupted

by the appearance of Valérie, who summoned the Doctor to her mistress, and told Henry that she was now in a state of lethargy, which was the only rest she knew, and recommended him to return the next day at the same hour, when Lady Rainham would, if her usual condition was prolonged, be better able to speak to him. He promised to come, and, with a heavy heart, went home. He saw that there was no time to be lost, and that he must take courage and speak, ere it was too late.

He returned on the morrow, and on being ushered into Lamia's room, he was grieved to find her apparently weaker than the day before, and in every particular, but the fire of her fine wild eyes, oppressed by an universal feebleness. She spoke first: "Henry, I fear

to die!" were the only words she could utter —words which spoke volumes to his heart, which was well nigh full to bursting.

"Lamia!" he said, "I come not now to fatigue you with deep argument or lengthened disquisition; the soundest reasoning and the most eloquent preaching have less force than the simple Word of God upon a mind wearied like yours with pain. I come first to tell you I am still your friend and cousin— still bound to you by ties of former fellowship and affection, and solemnly to beseech you to open to me all that now preys upon and clogs your soul. Treat me as a brother, as a faithful though humble servant of God."

"Henry," she feebly repeated, "Henry, I fear to die!"

"O, Lamia!" he exclaimed, "say not so; or, if you say that, say more!"

"Ah! I have more to say—much more; but now, alas! I cannot. I would, but cannot speak out. Ah! Henry, you who are so good, forgive me—forgive; you—you forgive injuries, do you not? You—you are a Christian! Forgive—forgive—a Christian! Ah! what am I? ah!"

Her wild and incoherent manner alarmed Henry, who moved to recal Valérie or the Doctor, neither of whom were in the way, when Lamia beseechingly turned her imploring eyes upon him, and said: "Have patience with me. Forgive—oh! the past—forgive the past! Oh! that I had a friend, a sister: I once had an angel sister. Yes, she is gone now, never to meet again. Yes, had she lived, my lone and solitary heart would have had one to love; one that would never have deserted me, would have gone

hand-in-hand through life with me, and perhaps—perhaps—led me to God. O, Innocence! great is thy power!"

After a pause from mere exhaustion, she raised her dark eyes wildly towards him.

"Henry, you are married, you are; I knew it not: yes, I knew it, but not in time. Had I, so surely had I hurried home to forbid the bans: to poison—yes, to poison—bliss that was not mine. To sow dissension; to cause separation between *her* and you. Oh! what torment; my brain is on fire. Forgive—forgive—no, I meant it once; now I wish you nothing but happiness: I cannot die hating *you*."

Henry saw it was time to put an end to this painful scene. Her utterance was becoming every minute more hysterical, and hastily summoning her attendants, he returned home.

There is nothing in the whole circle of human malady so distressing as the mixture of sane and insane, in the ravings of those whose mind is, though temporarily, off its balance. None can enter into the feelings, or cloudy ideas, of the poor maniac; and it is not absence, but distortion, of ideas, that governs them. It were cruel to condemn Lamia for her false ideas and conceptions then; but fearfully astray must they not have gone before!

There is something inexpressibly awful in considering the frail link that binds soul to body; and this, too, from deeper considerations than mere terror of death. How can one man in health, however feelingly he beholds the sufferings of another, really enter into his sensations, however warmly he may sympathize with his pain? Death and mad-

ness, or even the smallest aberration of intellect, are things from their nature inexplicable by the sufferers themselves; and therefore no one should pretend, or dare, to interpret the actual feelings of the insane, or of the dying.

Lamia was gifted by nature with a remarkably clear intellect, which had not, however, been improved by her peculiar education. One thing, indeed, resulted from it, in her present state of pain and distraction, that even when racked by torments of brain and body, unable to give utterance to her thoughts, or speak her wants, those thoughts were as clear and collected as ever; and on her recovering, she could slowly recollect what had passed through her mind in the midst of agony.

Some days had elapsed, during which

Henry never failed to pay his morning and sometimes evening visit to his cousin, and was able, though she never minded, to hold some longer conversation with her than at first her agitation permitted. When calm, her regular features and still lustrous eyes, shaded by raven hair, recalled the beauty of her youth, such as he remembered her in early days during her parents' life. To those times she rarely alluded, and with no pleasurable impression; it seemed as if her youth had brought her into scenes of some terrific nature, which she now looked back upon with horror, and the remembrance of which always threw a cloud over her discourse, though Henry partly guessed her mysterious meaning. And when the unhappy Lamia implied her having deep, almost inexplicable guilt to answer for, she never sought, either

in weakness or in strength, to excuse her sins; but, with vehement despair, and with the most frantic expressions, made a point of proclaiming herself one of the guilty.

Henry was for a long time at a loss on what ground to take his stand. The English Church not requiring as of necessity priestly absolution, hardly requires or authorises the clergyman to employ that severe questioning in use among the Roman Catholics. At such moments, when the flame of life is quivering in the socket, questions are worse than useless; spontaneous confession, if the state of the dying permit it, is all that can be expected. To encourage that, then, was now Henry's principal object.

Lamia, in one of her respites from suffering, which now grew more rare, though the intensity of pain was by degrees subsiding into a melancholy prostration of strength, men-

tioned his wife—and mentioned her in terms which Henry interpreted as expressive of good-will and interest towards her.

This for many reasons not now to be narrated, surprised him; and thinking it a good opportunity for raising some softer feelings than those usually reigning in Lamia's breast, he said:

"In that point, my dear cousin, I am happy. I am blest in home and in companionship with one suited to her situation, and therefore suited to me."

"I know, I know," she replied. "I know what amiable young creatures may be; but I see them not, I have no common tie or feeling with them. If I asked about her, it was for your sake."

"Well," said Henry, "that is enough; I accept your meaning, and accept it for her.

Believe me there is none, after myself, so interested for you as Emma."

"Emma, Emma, is that her name? Where is she? let me see her. She is good, she is innocent. Will she indeed see me? will she pity me? will she forgive? O, Iris, Iris, would to God you were left to me!" A flood of natural tears interrupted her, and gave seasonable relief to her excited brain.

As soon as Lamia had recovered herself, she resumed:

"Had my sister lived, had I had such a companion and friend through life, my mind would not have been locked up like a sealed book to all confidence and counsel. Isolated and misunderstood as it has been my fate to be, my mind has grown dark and gloomy, my thoughts have been locked up in themselves; what wonder then if wickedness

throve in them? I know my wretched state. I know not God, though I fear him, dread him—as I dread the evil one. If I must soon appear before my stern Judge and Creator, oh! what—what shall be my plea?"

"God be merciful to me a sinner!" ejaculated Henry, solemnly.

Lamia repeated the words, clasped her hands, and fell back, sobbing. Her cousin, afraid of paroxysm, would have called her attendants, but recovering herself with effort, she exclaimed:

"And must not I first believe? what do I believe? I believe in wrath, terror, vengeance, as surely as I do in crime, too surely —or in—nothing!"

"And in mercy?" said Henry.

"Mercy! no mercy for a wretch like me. I believe in the vast, the universal power of

the evil one: I feel him, I know him, his power, his revenge is sure—"

"And in the power of God?" said Henry.

"I would, but I cannot; I believe but in one power, whatever you call it—the power of Almighty vengeance. I believe in hell: I believe but in what I know. What must I do, how must I pray, to gain a belief in Heaven?"

"Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" was the solemn rejoinder.

Lamia mechanically repeated the words, and seemed to feel their meaning, and as mechanically repeated after them the former passage: "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Henry was profoundly moved, not only at the gloomy picture of a deserted soul that had been disclosed to him, but also at the singular effect his apt quotations seemed to

have upon Lamia. He was encouraged to proceed in his pious endeavour.

"Then," continued Lamia, "if I can at last believe and pray for mercy—which I shall never obtain—what hope have I to gain forgiveness? What length of prayer, of penance, of good works must I go through, when time no more remains to me? Is there no place for repentance, none for pardon left? My God, my God—!"

"In the name of Christ," said Henry, "your sins, were they as scarlet, shall be made as white as snow."

Lamia was now evidently too much affected to bear more; she lay back on her couch repeating over and over the sentences Henry had quoted, like a child beginning to understand its lesson, and though but half understood, they seemed by degrees to pene-

trate her mind, and to tranquillize her struggles within. She would have detained Henry, but he thought it better to retire, promising to bring his wife on the morrow.

This day's moving scene deeply affected him, ke knew that his cousin's education had unhappily floated between superstition and infidelity, and he shuddered at the result.

On his return home, he thought it necessary to open with caution his design to Emma, asking her if she thought she had nerve and resolution to go through with it. He explained to her not only the lamentable state of illness to which his cousin was reduced, the wayward spirit and temper, to which so much consideration and forbearance were due, but also the condition of her mind, for which he thought his wife's pure and gentle conversation might be a more healing

balm than the stronger remedies of argument or eloquence, which Lamia was no longer fitted to bear. Despairing of doing good by reason, he hoped that the simple contact with a kind and pious heart, would do more for that benighted soul than all his own learning or divinity. He thought, too, that he had some reason to be satisfied with the impression he had made on Lamia's sore and wounded spirit in their interview of that day; and in this he was not altogether deceived.

It sometimes happens that persons who have never been exposed to any great trials, either of feelings or courage, do, when the occasion presents itself, show a greater resolution and judgment than those whose experience in such scenes has been greater. Simplicity and backwardness of demeanour is

often taken for timidity and want of character, until proved to be the very opposite quality of mind. So it turned out with regard to Emma.

On opening his scheme cautiously to his wife, Henry was not more surprised than overjoyed to find that she joined heartily in his plan of comforting his afflicted cousin through her care and attention. He frankly told her the difficulties of the task, and the new and singular character she would have to deal with, but she shrank from nothing.

"What," said she, "is my task in this world but to be useful? and the woman that declines to assist her fellow-woman in necessity is unworthy the name of her fellow-creature."

They accordingly proceeded next morning to the Abbey.

Hardly arrived at the door of Lamia's apartment, they were met by Valérie, who informed them with calm but expressive grief that her mistress had passed a wretched night, and that Dr. Schuler was now with her, and in consequence they must wait a few minutes. The fixed melancholy of this woman's countenance cast a deep gloom upon Emma's soul; she who had come buoyed up by the pleasing anticipation of being useful, perhaps successful, in her endeavours to alleviate Lamia's afflictions, now suddenly felt the foreboding of an inevitable catastrophe. Nevertheless, virtuous and courageous, she went on.

She had time, however, while waiting, to be struck with the air of elegant and artistic refinement pervading the whole of Lamia's habitation. It was on a scale and in a style

of living new to her, and contrasted sadly with the scene within. Rainham Abbey combined the seclusion of the monastery with the taste of a palace; the spacious corridors, the pleasant gardens, the fragrant bowers, and all the other appurtenances of luxurious ease, the beauties of painting and sculpture were to her as the whitest sepulchre that conceals the remains of mortality.

Henry and Emma were at length conducted to the chamber of their unfortunate cousin. Dr. Schuler met them in the anteroom, and said: "You will find the Baroness greatly reduced since yesterday—to me, to you who know her, her mind will appear perfect, though miserable; but do not be alarmed if in her countenance you see workings that, to a stranger (turning to

Emma), would appear like signs of absence of reason."

Henry entered first, leaving his wife in melancholy contemplation of the beautiful portrait of the two sisters. In a minute or two, he softly opened the door, and beckoned to her to come in. Emma obeyed.

Lamia was lying in much the same nearly inanimate state as when Henry saw her the first night he was summoned to her sick bed, but when she turned her face towards him, oh, what a change even from yesterday! the bright eye was sunk in its socket, the finely-chiselled brow was as sculptured marble, the black hair seemed blacker than before, the hollow voice went to his heart, involuntary and convulsive twitchings when she endeavoured to

speak arrested or distorted her words. She thus began (after dismissing her two attendants):

"Are you then really come to see a poor, wretched, dying woman? Is it not a dream, do I not see my beloved sister again?" She stared vacantly at Emma, and then at Henry, who replied: "This, Lamia, is my wife, and as such, I can promise for her that she will, if you suffer her to attend you, practise all that my feeling would suggest, but which a woman's care will better execute." Emma then approached the bed, opened her lips, but was so overcome with emotion, that though she never thought of flinching from her purpose, she found she could not utter a word.

"Oh, my sister!" ejaculated Lamia, still

fixing her glassy eyes on Emma, who found courage to say: "Allow me to be as a sister, and I will prove myself one to you."

"Sister!" said Lamia, whose ideas, previously wandering, seem fixed and pleased at the thought.

After a short time, by one of those wonderful efforts of which nature is sometimes capable, she seemed to rouse herself, and addressing Henry, said: "When I spoke of your wife's coming, yesterday, I never expected to see her. I thought she would shun me—shun the unhappy. O, thou whom I see, image of my lost, my darling Iris, thou over whom the breath of Heaven has never poured aught but its choicest blessings—innocence and peace—

look on me—pity me—and pray for me."

Gaining strength apparently as she went on, she turned to Henry, and said: "All night, I repeated the words you taught me; and I would—I would believe, but an evil spirit possesses me, and fills me with horrors of the future, such as my aching brain tells me daily and hourly are but too real and too surely in store for me, a sinner. Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" She clasped her hands with fervour and with an expression of terror that again brought a fearful animation into that marble countenance, and showed the intensity of her mental agony. Her mind was always more alive to pain and fear than to comfort or pleasure.

Henry thought it time to interpose, and

in a kind but earnest manner, said: "What you allude to so forcibly as that which weighs heavy on your soul, it is not for me to know, nor at this trying moment do I mean to ask; whatever it be, and we all are more guilty than we imagine, it is within the reach of pardon; but on the condition of repentance. Repentance now with you, Lamia, can be but from the heart: you cannot now look forward to active amendment. I know something of your mind, of your habits, of your thought, and if you say you believe not as you would wish to believe, much may be allowed to the faults of education and, alas! wasted time. But do you *disbelieve*, Lamia? Answer me that. We have no time for argument." She made no answer.

"Lamia," said Emma, anxiously, but got no further.

"I am not willing to disbelieve, but I am not *convinced*," said she, "of all that you comprehend under the name of religious truth. Faith is not mine, Hope is not mine, Charity is not mine, if that means to include my enemies."

"O, Lamia!" said Henry, distressed beyond measure, "you were once more tractable and more forgiving. For God's sake, recal your words!"

"I know," returned she, with growing wildness of manner, "that Faith, Hope, and Charity I ought to have—beautiful and heavenly virtues; but I cannot—something within—something here," striking her head, "prevents it."

Henry thought it necessary now to summon Dr. Schuler, whose presence was the best

security for keeping the poor sufferer tranquil, and with difficulty obtained Lamia's consent to his and Emma's departure. On the point of differing with him, showing more temper and asperity than ever, she yet liked to see him and Emma by her bedside, and was only pacified by their promise to return early the next morning.

Henry and Emma walked home in silence, each had too much to think of to allow of conversation. After some time, however, he asked her whether she began to lose courage, and on her assuring him that so long as he remained constant to the task they had undertaken, nothing should make her swerve from it, he said: "It is fortunate your accidental likeness to my poor cousin Iris has so fixed itself in Lamia's imagination: were it

not for that, her wayward nature might have rejected your attentions."

"I take it as a good omen," replied Emma, "and an encouragement to persevere."

CHAPTER III.

" The feeble eyes of our aspiring thoughts
Behold things present and record things past,
But things to come exceed our human reach,
And are not painted yet in angel's eyes."

GEORGE PEELE.

" O, light! which mak'st the light, which makes the day,
Which sett'st the eye without, the mind within,
Lighten my spirit with one clear heav'nly ray
Which now to view itself doth first begin."

DAVIES.

THE morning found them at the Abbey gate at an early hour, where they were met by Valérie with the agreeable news that

Lamia had passed a tranquil night, and seemed not worse than yesterday; "but," said she, "it will not last long. All night she has been repeating 'phrases' of what you said to her, which she seems to like, or softly whispering, 'Sister!' and has even slept."

By the time they were at her bedside, Lamia, though she opened not her eyes, was aware of their presence, and softly murmured, "Sister—sister," to which Emma, with a presence of mind that astonished her husband, answered, "I am here." Lamia opened her large eyes, and looking on the truly anxious friends, who alone seemed to care for her in this world, sighed deeply, but spoke not. They sat down by her bed, content to wait and watch her, which she evidently perceived.

The instinct (for when mind is low and

oppressed it is but that) of the sick is sometimes wonderful. The increased sensibility, not activity, of the nerves to outward sensations is more or less known to all who have suffered severe illness; it seems as if the very inmost powers of the soul were quickened, and threw off what we commonly call mind, or intellect, almost as a material incumbrance like the body which contains it.

So it was with Lamia. Addressing them both, she said: "You are my only friends, desert me not. My mind is weak; nay, is almost gone. I can bear no arguments. Reason not with me. You are brother and sister to me. But my soul is here, and I see clearer than ever the nothingness, the despicable wretchedness of the world. But ye are angels in the world. O, Iris, my sister! my sister! hear me. There is no religion—

all is false, all is hypocrisy in the world. You are the only Christians it has been my lot to find at the last ebb of life. Talk not to me, I cannot follow you. But I know your goodness, because I feel it. Your souls seem in contact with mine—how unworthy to meet them. If anything will save my wretched soul, it is your kindness, your virtues interceding for my guilt."

Henry, anxious to put an end to this incoherent raving, offered her a glass of some cordial which stood near, but she would take nothing but from the hand of Emma, towards whom she seemed drawn by an attraction she could not resist.

"My story is a long one," said she, "and one day, Henry, you may find it in yonder box, of which I give you the key. Full soon will you see it. Tell me, Henry, once

more, those words of comfort you pronounced yesterday; but in spite of which, Henry, I fear to die. I was wild, I was mad, I believe, yesterday; I *would* believe, I *would* forgive, but who will forgive me? I dread the wrath to come: I dread not leaving this hollow world."

Henry again slowly pronounced the sentences she desired, and added: "Pray, Lamia, and you *will* believe, you *will* forgive, even as you will be forgiven. Even Solomon, on dedicating his glorious temple, could only offer up his prayer to God in saying, 'When we pray unto Thee from this Thy Temple, hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling-place—and when Thou hearest—Forgive!' "

It would be impossible to describe the intense attention Lamia paid to these words, those sunken eyes which alone lighted up

that pallid countenance no longer capable of the effort of muscular expression, gave, as it seemed to Henry, tacit but implicit assent to all he said. After a silence, in which all seemed plunged in deep feeling, her low voice was heard to utter slowly the word "Forgive!" She made no further attempt to speak, and Valérie and Dr. Schuler, who now entered the room, signified to her visitors that they had better withdraw.

Five or six days longer did the poor Lamia linger on in the same state of mind and body, hovering, as it were, between life and death. Her mind, now incapable of grasping a new or extensive subject, was only to be reached by the most direct and marked expressions. Henry's experience taught him that the double operation of mentally comprehending any proposition, and subsequently

making the application to herself was more than in her present condition she could bear, or he hope for.

An ill-taught or inexperienced mind is ever in danger of losing sight of that which it may have comprehended and assented to most easily; and it is no wonder this poor woman during the few remaining days of life was now eagerly catching and accepting with joy the comfortable words of the Gospel which her excellent cousin instilled into her, it may be said, for the first time, and now falling back into doubt and despair. Such inconsistencies can only, in such a case, be met by patience in the teacher; and truth, even without argument, will force its way into the mind by repetition. Thenceforth, Lamia said but little, though her two attendants reported that throughout the night she would repeat

at intervals the sacred words she had heard from Henry. He brought her by degrees to understand, that in her eleventh hour the true and earnest desire, the sincere will to believe, to repent, if persevered in to the last, might without now fatiguing her reason with argument, avail to preserve her from that wrath to come which she was ever and anon invoking upon her own guilty head. He had latterly, with her consent, read daily to her the solemn office of Visitation of the Sick, with the prayer for the soul on the point of departure; and although she never swerved from what appeared to be her good dispositions when calm and free from pain, yet the paroxysms, whenever they occurred, left such symptoms of a confused and disordered mind, and such a return to her awful terrors of conscience, as nearly unnerved him. She

hinted at dark, and almost unpardonable crimes, was ready to destroy herself (an idea not new to her according to Dr. Schuler's significant whispers to Henry), and in the same breath declared she was innocent of all but guilty thought and imagination. Latterly her eyes moved with difficulty, but whenever they glanced on her sister, as she persisted in calling Emma, she became tranquil and even moved to tears. Such charm has the mere presence of innocence on the troubled spirit of the repentant sinner. But her present impressions, dim as they must be, were so new to her, that not having the *habit* of belief, this unhappy woman was at every spasm relapsing into the mental horrors of her previous incredulity, a philosophy which utterly failed her in the hour of trial.

In one of her last intervals of rest, she

pointed again and again to the jasper box, and Henry, having the key, opened it in her presence. It contained nothing but the manuscript of her confession, which she had once before alluded to, and which she now put, sealed, into his hands, saying, in a low moan: "Not yet—not yet!" which he took to mean that it was not to be inspected until after her death. "I understand you, dear Lamia," said he, in a tone of deep affection: "you shall be obeyed in this and everything you desire." She made a sign of acquiescence, and seemed satisfied.

So much mystery hung over Lamia's life, and the fact of her giving this paper, sealed, and marked with the words, "Read this when the writer shall be no more," showed so plainly that she would not, or could not, bear to have that mystery solved while she was on

earth, that Henry found his difficulties greatly increased by it. Her frequent and distressing appeals to him for consolation, or as she called it, absolution; her mixed and contradictory assertions of guilt and innocence alternately; and the partial knowledge he had of the real circumstances of the case as deserving pardon, obliged him to confine himself strictly to general terms implying repentance and mercy, accompanied with the most heartfelt compassion.

Lamia had been brought up between the extremes of scepticism and superstition, and was, by a natural consequence, imbued with the principles of *doubt* and *fear*. Love, heavenly love, was not likely to arise in such a breast, and the dim, uncertain heaven that she guessed of, was almost as much an object of apprehension to her as its opposite, which

she pictured to herself as far more real in its existence. She had not been so ill-educated as not to have a knowledge of religion, the observances of a bigoted Roman Catholic mother, and the arguments of an infidel father had not left her in ignorance of the great want of mankind; but her knowledge was not cultivated with any intelligence of its value, or trained into any habit of its duties. The beauty of religion as well as its necessity were unknown to her.

How are the mighty fallen! How is the vanity of mind and body disclosed at the last hour! The body perishes, while the hitherto close union of mind and soul (which, like light and heat in the material world, vivify the intellectual and moral essence of our being) is dissolved, and nought remains of haughty man but his soul, once neglected if

not despised, but now the only responsible part of his existence.

Lamia's alternate restlessness and complete prostration increased daily; Dr. Schuler and Valérie, who were both really attached to her, were now in constant attendance. Henry's courage left him not, though he trembled violently as he saw the crisis approaching, and feared for Emma, whose constancy never gave way.

While speechless, she had turned her head heavily on the pillow towards Emma, with a look that showed she never desired to move it again; when, accidentally, a curtain at the foot of her bed fell, and disclosed a small but most pathetic picture of the crucifixion, sketched by Rubens, on the idea of his sublime painting at Antwerp, before which, Lamia had often seen her mother kneel, and

which had inspired her, as a child, with awe, if not with reverence or affection.

Lamia feebly raised her eyes till they fell upon the well-known picture; and then that pale and bloodless countenance, whose features had been fixed as marble, relaxed into a faint smile, as if the inward workings of the soul were suddenly turned from powerless despair to humble hope, and as, having lived in doubt, she could now die in faith. Emma, who strove in vain to suppress her tears, knelt by her side, and watching the gradually sinking frame, then placed the poor penitent's hands (as she had frequently done of late with her evident assent) in the attitude of prayer, while Henry repeated her favourite words: "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."

The dreaded crisis which Henry Lucy had

foreseen, was, indeed, near; and while Emma and he were looking on in breathless suspense, a slight convulsive heaving of the before-motionless form might gradually be perceived, accompanied by a tremor of the limbs which, in the state in which Lamia was, could not be other than an indication of acute suffering. The brow, fixed as it had been, was suddenly and powerfully contracted, bringing forcibly to her cousin's recollection a strange and dark presentiment which had gained strong hold of her too susceptible imagination in former times, that a serpent had got possession of her brain.

He had known too, and none but he, the passionate feelings that had distracted Lamia, both in heart and mind, in the days which this painful recollection recalled, and though he strove with utmost might to repel the

odious remembrance, yet memory, that relentless stimulator of conscience, would not allow him to reject the thought. If, therefore, it occurred to him, what must its present cruel domination be over his afflicted cousin ?

Her state of bodily suffering grew momentarily worse and worse, her clasped hands remained so firmly clenched, that death alone could relax their hold—a fearfully correct symbol of the mind within—but they remained clasped, as if prayer, at the last moment, struggled frightfully with remorse. Her eye, still fixed upon the cross—immoveably fixed—sank deeper and deeper in the socket, a violent agitation of the lips succeeded, as if it were a last effort to utter words less of the body than of the soul: a terrific spasm succeeded—and all was still.

The evil one loses not his prey without a struggle; the soul, however victorious, gains not her freedom without a terrific combat; if such be the case, even in the death of the just, what must it not be in that of the conscious, though not hardened, sinner? The best may say, with the Poet, in the words of David:

"Sin, with his sevenfold crown and purple robe,
Begins his triumphs in my guilty throne:
There sits he watching, with his hundred eyes,
Our idle minutes and our wanton thoughts;
And with his baits made of our frail desires,
Gives us the hook that draws our soul to hell,"

It is not given to man in health to interpret the feelings of the dying, but Henry, as he marked the now dimmed eye still directed to her Saviour, the now lifeless countenance reposing in peace, the hands no longer con-

vulsed, but still clasped and fallen, as if naturally before her, could not but feel that when the battle is well fought, victory cannot be doubtful. His faith taught him that, to the weak, strength may be given at the last; and he prayed as he knelt by the inanimate clay: "O, God! may'st Thou have been merciful to a poor penitent!"

Emma echoed the humble supplication in the true spirit of the Catholic Church, and then overcome by her feelings, sank exhausted.

Dr. Schuler, in spite of all his philosophy, was deeply affected, though he kept a solemn silence. Valérie was removed in a state of insensibility.

It was long ere Emma could be torn from the awful scene she had witnessed, and Henry, far from hastening her departure,

thought it better she should give way to her natural emotion on the spot, than to hurry her home in the state of violent agitation in which she then was. Now all was over, her calm self-possession entirely forsook her ; and her husband, himself overcome by the sudden relaxation of the stretch to which all his faculties had been exerted, to say nothing of bodily fatigue during the last fortnight, was far from able to support her in the trial. At last the entrance of a servant with lights, which had been called for by Dr. Schuler, warned them that evening had set in, and the village apothecary, who had always been in attendance, whispered significantly to the Doctor, asking if he had any further orders. There having been no establishment in the Abbey, beyond some village servants, everything now fell on

Dr. Schuler to arrange, and he, with feeling and propriety, asked Henry's counsel and assistance.

Henry saw the object, and requested that he would call on him the next morning at his own time, being quite unequal to attend to any business at that moment.

But perceiving it was dark, for the autumnal evening was fast closing in, he begged the apothecary to accompany Emma and himself across the park, after which they had but a step to go to their parsonage. Valérie, for the time, was quite unable to assist in anything, so they left Dr. Schuler, and some under-servants alone in their late mistress's apartment, until the apothecary should return.

Sad were the reflections of this small, but melancholy party, as they slowly paced the

now gloomy corridors, and issued into the wide and deserted park. Not a word was spoken. Emma, painfully alive to all she had seen and heard, hardly knew where she was, and suffered herself to be supported, or rather dragged along, by her two attentive companions.

Henry's mind was occupied with the natural reflections which would occur to a minister of religion after the event, ushered in by such mysterious circumstances; and the contrast between the present dark, sad walk across the park, the wind sighing among the trees, the falling leaves, the chill, dank atmosphere, and the bright summer's night in which he had traversed the same ground in hope a few weeks previously, weighed heavily on his spirits. No man, perhaps, had more fortitude than he, and he had shown it; but

fortitude is not always to be commanded. He dreaded secretly the opening of the unhappy Lamia's confession, which he carried closely pressed to his bosom, for he had a real affection for her. He had loved her sincerely, in spite of her faults, some of which he knew too well.

Emma, almost unable to walk, nearly fainted twice before reaching their humble home, which, after some delay, they entered with heavy hearts, and retired to bed, but not to rest.

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so Heaven has will'd, we die?
Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh.

The next morning, after an early breakfast, Dr. Schuler, who had walked down to

the parsonage, accompanied Henry back to the Abbey. Their talk, as might be supposed, was chiefly of the long ill health and great bodily sufferings of the lamented Lamia; and Henry learnt, for the first time, the extraordinary malady to which she had been subject ever since Dr. Schuler had known her. He assured Henry that it was not a complication, but a combination of different, and even of opposite affections of mind and body, such as it had never before been his lot to witness, and for which, as a physician, he did not believe there existed any remedy, scarcely even an alleviation. Her reason, he said, was at once sharpened in some points, and confused in others, by the effect of pain on the cerebral nerves, in like manner as her bodily strength was at times totally prostrated, at times also, almost superhumanly reinforced

by the spasmodic struggles of constitution against disorder. Such a mingled state of affliction, he said, could never, with all the advantages of this world, have borne up long against the encroachments of returning malady, and however trite and commonplace the remark of death being a happy release, never was there a case in which, speaking as a physiologist, he thought it more literally true.

By this time they were arrived at the Abbey, where Henry was struck with a sudden chill, by the sight of a few articles of black, which the servants, un-ordered, had thought it necessary to put on, and which more forcibly than anything, because visibly, recalled to his senses, that this was the house of death. Indeed, where death is not absolutely sudden or unexpected, the anticipation

of it as an event, as simply a certainty that must even shortly arrive, takes off much from the shock felt by the sincerest and most affectionate mourners. But when the coarse, material, and tangible proofs of that event appear to be acknowledged by all around, when the heart can no longer postpone or repel its feelings, then the inevitable revulsion comes with the double force of fearful expectation and irremediable reality.

Henry, regardless of all around, and occupied with contending emotions, found himself half intentionally, half not, in the very chamber of death, before he was aware of it. He had need to summon all his fortitude before he could approach the couch, whereon still lay all that remained on earth of Lamia. Closely covered, all but the head, she lay, an image of such repose as her life

had seldom exhibited, but which gave to Henry's not impartial heart a picture of what, with sound health and regulated understanding, so gifted a person might have been. That marble brow no longer clouded by any expression of pain or passion, the sunken cheeks and colourless lips, not now swayed by consciousness of any bodily suffering or mental affliction, spoke volumes to Henry, as he thought of past days. Her white skin, shaded by her long black tresses, and the sharpened bust-like outlines of her fine features, and sadly closed eyes, were all that survived, if it may so be said, of her beauty; but it was beauty, beauty in death.

Henry's tears flowed fast. He repeated mentally, but not exactly, Dr. Schuler's words: " Speaking as a Christian, death *is* a

happy release." Nobody could be more free from superstition, no one more firmly was persuaded that, as he gazed on the lifeless form before him, the spirit was not there; that all he had loved, cherished, cared for in Lamia, was for ever departed; yet he could not leave the late tenement of the heart, the mind, the soul of a cousin, to whom he had been so sincerely attached, without an effort that cost him a violent, though momentary pang.

He left, at last, the gloomy pile, and slowly taking the longest path back to the parsonage, partly to vary the scene and avoid unwelcome observations, partly to indulge his own melancholy reflections, he repaired to his own home. There he found Emma, whose spirits and strength, now all was over, were beginning to fail, and who was anxiously awaiting his return.

In the trouble of the previous night and morning, prayers had unavoidably been omitted ; but on this evening, Henry thought it right to re-assemble his household, and to add to his accustomed readings, that solemn prayer for the dead, who depart this life in God's faith and fear, together with the absolutions, which he pronounced with a deep and earnest tone of authority, that left a lasting impression on all present. He made no allusion to the present, which all readily understood.

When they had retired, Emma, musing, broke a long silence, by saying, timidly: " In poor Lamia's case, there was more fear than faith, I am afraid."

The husband gently chid her, and showed how the fear of God implies, by necessity, a faith in him, and that although fear may

exceed faith greatly in degree, as a natural consequence of human weakness, yet faith, which is an effort of mental strength and grace, may in its humble, but steadfast aspirations, be accepted as equivalent in sincerity to our fears. Alluding to the traditional persuasion, that all things will be made clear to the soul released, he explained that however sinful, wilful ignorance of matters of religion might be, our conditional ignorance was hardly even a misfortune.

That evening, Henry began to read the following paper, forming the confession entrusted to his hands before death by the unfortunate Lamia. He read it alone, reserving to himself the right to communicate it to his wife, at some future period, as circumstances might occur. He opened the

manuscript with feelings the reader may be enabled to conceive, who is sufficiently interested in the foregoing portion to follow, in its tangled and wandering narrative, the errors and sufferings of an unhappy and misguided woman.

CHAPTER IV.

"And thou, my soul, which turn'st with curious eye
To view the beams of thine own form divine,
Know, that thou canst know nothing perfectly,
Whilst thou art clouded with this flesh of mine.

"How senseless then and dead a soul hath he
Which thinks his soul doth with his body die,
Or thinks not so, but so would have it be,
That he might sin with more security."

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

LAMIA TO HENRY.

HENRY — dear Henry, in what terms shall I address you? How, at this last approaching moment, can I find words to express all that my restless, ever-aching heart

feels at the very sound of your name—at the remembrance of past years—at the thought of times long gone by? Ah! now too surely do I recognise in you the one true friend and faithful cousin—the chosen companion of my youth—in whom alone, among the votaries of a false and hollow world, I can look for truth, for affection, and for exculpation.

In thus addressing you, Henry, in the most solemn manner in which it is possible for one human being to communicate with another, in speaking to you, yet blooming in the freshness of life, with a voice that will only reach you from the depths of my sad and early tomb, I must, before proceeding with my eventful story, beg and entreat you, Henry, to grant me, for the last time, two simple requests.

First, I implore that you will forgive me all the injuries I may have done you: for pity's sake, Henry—and you know that I would spurn pity, but in the grave—forgive all that I have done, or meant to do. My only hope for rest from pain, vexation, and calumny, is in death.

Next, I beg you to remember that, whatever feelings these, my dying words, may raise in your sensitive and too irritable breast, I speak from that place to which no answer of yours can penetrate. I know your feeling heart. You will exclaim, remonstrate, recriminate, upbraid, perhaps, your poor Lamia, not undeservedly; but, remember you cry to the dead! In my grave I cannot answer you! and, even if my spirit be allowed a dim consciousness of what passes upon earth, the shade of Lamia cannot reply to

you. No, no; annihilation is my lot! or, if not that, some existence of pain like that I would so willingly escape from.

But my story must be told, and, Henry, I would rivet your attention to the outpourings of passion, I would have you thoroughly penetrated and embued with the feelings of pride and jealousy, doubt and suspicion, which I know full well myself have been the ruling passions of my character.

You may not, perhaps, remember the difference there was between my father and mother in education, religion, and even in natural disposition. I was passionately attached to both of them. I loved them partly from natural feeling, partly from a burning desire I have felt all my life to be loved myself for myself: an innate tact

showed me that to be loved, I must love, and I devoted myself to my parents.

My father you knew well, but were not, perhaps, acquainted with his early history. My mother you hardly remember.

Differently constituted as they were in many respects, my father and mother were decidedly attached to each other. He had been educated in the full tide of the philosophical spirit of the last century, and endowed as he was with earnestness of inquiry, and talent to prosecute and profit by it, he soon mastered what was then known of the ethical and natural sciences; and, as might have been expected from such a character, went far in all the fields of new discovery. Often have I heard him repeat his conversations with the first philosophers of

that day, and express his admiration of the eagle-spirit which led them to break the trammels of convention, and to brave the censures of an ignorant and bigoted world. Their instruction formed his mind; and from constantly following up every new physical discovery, every clever mechanical invention, and fathoming in reflection every bold metaphysical speculation, he became so habituated to the idea of man's being himself the first power of the universe, that he ended by being little more than nominally within the pale of Christianity. My father had ambition, and desired to excel, whether in the closet or the field—in public debate or in study. He went on, till, being as convinced of man's eventual power over the elements, and possible control of all the forces of nature, as he was of man's intellectual superiority to

all created beings, he saw nothing that the mind of man was not equal to conceiving, or the hand of man would not, at some future period, be capable of executing. In a word, Lord Rainham's comprehensive mind united the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy of the ancients, with that of the schools of physical and metaphysical investigation among the moderns.

No wonder that, in his position, these free opinions, joined to a fine temper, an amiable private character, and a large fortune, made him at once courted and encouraged as a young man by all that part of society capable of conferring distinction. A less even disposition would have been spoilt by the assurances he received from the elder part of those of his own rank, as well as from the heads of the philosophical and artistic world, that he

was fitted to take his place among the leaders of this nation, whenever it might please him to make an effort.

One of the branches of rational science to which my father was most partial, and in which he had advanced to great proficiency, was astronomy. From him I learnt the principles of that elevating, and at the same time, bewildering study, which has been my chief contemplation in hours of solitude and travel, and which has raised my mind from the cares and distractions of my harassed youth to the splendid mysteries of the universe. My father's sound sense, joined to the special talent for discrimination and analysis for which he was remarkable, did not allow him to display his peculiar opinions in the shape either of levity, or of disrespect for creeds and doctrines venerated by the world in general.

No, he steadily pursued his philosophical views, and calmly proclaimed his incredulity, rather than his infidelity. You, Henry, will say the difference is small; it may be so, and I enter not into fine distinctions. One thing I must add: religion had not been seen in my father's family under the most attractive form; and without anticipating my narrative, I will hint that the puritanical severity of his mother had driven him from the society of the Church.

Of my own mother, whom you can hardly remember, and whose memory has had so strong an influence, as I think, upon my own character, I will speak later. At present, I will recal to your mind my sister, who was seven years my senior, and, as I was always reminded, a great contrast to myself.

. Iris had a thoughtful, reflective mind, capable of deep study and steady application: her slow acquirements were always solid, and highly appreciated by our parents; while my more quickly mastered accomplishments did not, as I conceived, meet with all the praise that was due to them. Had Iris possessed genius in proportion to her amiable disposition, and to her other qualities, she would have approached perfection.

Her childish beauty early attracted all that saw her, and called forth, in too great a degree, the exclusive preference of our parents. Favouritism in a family is an insidious worm, that destroys the benefit of the most careful education: it sours the sweet affection of brother and sister, distorts the natural feeling of parents and children, and creates enmities or jealousies for life. In

after age, dissensions will occur; but it should be the first object of parents to make their children feel perfectly equal before *them*, whatever their different talents or qualifications may be.

Iris was beautiful; her fair hair streamed in luxuriant tresses over her shoulders, while her blue eyes lit up a regular and placid countenance, whose rosy bloom would have borne comparison with the blush of the morning. So much older than me, she was every way more advanced in our youthful studies; and was, I must now, alas! confess, endowed by nature with a sound understanding for her years, which my subsequent life and errors have too well shown my want of. I pay this late tribute to my poor sister—would I had been earlier aware that genius will only fill the sails, but wisdom must guide

the rudder, in a voyage through life! It is true, I had talent enough to surpass her with ease in later years; but, as a child, I made no allowance for the distinction naturally and intelligibly awarded to her, who stood before me in every way; and then began the germ of that jealousy, which has been the root of all my faults.

That jealousy or envy—for now I spare not myself, I am willing to give it the worst of names—poisoned the cup of childhood; and, by indulging in this vicious feeling, I deprived myself of a sister's friendship in youth, when it is as useful to the younger, as amiable in the elder. Not that we quarrelled—no, her equanimity of temper, and little susceptibility to impressions, not to say a certain consciousness, or rather assumption, of mental superiority in myself, pre-

vented that; but we had little community of feeling, and consequently no sister-like intimacy. On common occasions, we loved each other well enough—we would have done anything to serve each other, as a duty; but, as I have only to condemn myself, I must own that, on the slightest provocation, my temper, always warm and ungovernable, excited me to demonstrations of passion, of which the calm spirit of abstraction—for such, in truth, was Iris—had no idea.

Her calm, unruffled judgment made her a favourite with my father, who easily undertook the direction of her mind, and almost masculine course of reading. Classics, mathematics, science in all its branches, were familiar to her; and though I was far from despising such acquirements, I soon found

that my volatile, lively disposition, in spite of great quickness in learning, was less prized than the studious attention of my sister.

My childish ambition was ever to be the first in every company, and to be considered superior to my sister in ability and brilliant accomplishments, if not in learning and information. It will hardly be believed that this feeling was totally independent of vanity. I read; I laboured hard to outdo my sister, and to justify my own pretensions; but that was not enough with such counteracting qualities as I own I possessed, to make me such a general favourite as my placid sister. I bore this ill, but I bore it in silence.

I cannot complain that my father neglected me; on the contrary, he was proud of my talent, and, as you know in after life, gave me every encouragement to mental and

artistic cultivation. When he learnt to know and appreciate my real abilities, more especially after my sister's death, he abandoned the idea of making me the learned philosopher that she was evidently likely to become, and urged me to perfect myself in my own tastes, to which he himself, through me, became more and more attached.

But his high genius would not be content with the mere artist; his taste required the life that animates the inert block—that bids the canvas glow, and gives a soul to the ethereal sounds to which the voice of nature, or the resources of science, give utterance—that life without which Music herself is but a tinkling cymbal. I entered warmly into his views, and my pursuits were thenceforth guided by his tastes, and matured by his judgment. It is a great mistake to suppose

that the education of daughters should be conducted exclusively by the mother; a father's superintendence and counsels are, at a certain age, quite as requisite; while the more girls are distinguished for originality and talent, the more they require a strong and experienced understanding to guide them.

I come at last to the description I must give you of my mother, or rather my recollections of her. As I was but eight years old when she died, my memory serves me but little with regard to her; but I have heard so much since, that I can sufficiently well complete the picture. She was, as you know, the daughter of an Italian nobleman of the city of Salerno, and allied to the highest families of Bologna. Extremely beautiful, well

educated for her country, and of a most amiable though high-spirited disposition, she was at the same time most devotedly subservient to her religion, to its ministers, and to all its minute observances. Indeed, the little I recollect of her, is chiefly connected with her fasts, her penances, her prayers, and her liberal almsgiving. My sister and I were both, of course, brought up in what was meant to be much more than the externals of the Roman faith; with me, it certainly went no further than a blind imitation of my mother's religious practices; with my sister, it may have gone deeper. Our mutual want of confidence prevented us from knowing each other's minds on this or other subjects. My father, with his peculiar opinions, let us alone; and after my mother's death, we were never

called on for any religious duties we chose to avoid, and the confessor was forbidden the house.

It is time that I should speak of this man, who played no unimportant part in the interior politics of the family. I never could bear him; my nature, violent but straightforward, was in utter discord with his wiles. Educated as my sister and I were, in the forms and, as my mother fondly thought, the principles of the Roman Catholic Church, we were continually in contact with him, and that, as you may imagine, was to me, a constant penance. He was a man of great ability, learned as a Benedictine, skilful as a Jesuit, servile as a Capuchin, yet proud, as if the whole Papacy dwelt in his mind, and depended upon the exercise of his talents. His cleverness and information, for a time, ingratiated him with

my father, and his superstitious sanctity made him equally attractive to my mother; but to us children he was always odious. He bitterly hated the Church of England, and took up more readily with the free opinions of my father than with any description of Protestantism. He had lived much in the world, and knew it well.

Father Dominic was of the order of Servites, or servants of the Virgin, an order remarkable for its bigotry and superstition. The revolution had ejected them from their convent, for which indeed the reverend father was but little fitted, and he resolved to labour in the interests of his Church in the world itself, rather than to bury his talents in a hermitage. Circumstances had introduced him at Rome to the family of the Anselmi, Dukes of Valmontone, to which my mother

belonged; a step in his career, which he did not fail to turn to the best advantage for his future progress. Himself a native of Lombardy, he had in youth had many opportunities of acquiring general and modern literature, and scientific knowledge, by no means common at Rome at that time; and had his moral courage been equal to his acquirements and abilities, he might have aspired to some conspicuous post in the Papal Government. But I never saw a man so devoid of that spirit, which in general arises spontaneously from consciousness of superiority—wherein Father Dominic was not deficient—if from no other source.

The education of the Anselmi family, and of course their spiritual direction, was thus entrusted to a priest, who, far from wishing to impart to them much or any

of his more enlightened views, made use of his own superiority to keep them in the dark. He knew well the faults, social and political, of his own country, but studiously forbore to hint them to his pupils. He was perfectly informed of the new discoveries of science, of the extension of liberty, of useful arts, of commerce, navigation, geography, but restricted his course of instruction to the old routine of the propaganda.

He made my mother and sister believe that nothing of worldly affairs, of which by accident they might hear, was certain, everything was doubtful, nothing was true but the missal and breviary, and of course the legends. In the times of trouble, their prayers, their penances, and voluntary inflictions, were to save the Papacy and religion throughout the world; and many were the pilgrimages and

painful services, many were the offerings and ceremonies we poor girls had to go through for this object. My mother has often tried to excite me to such acts of piety, of the efficacy of which she was firmly persuaded, and though I was but a child, yet I assure you the trifling observances she imposed upon me, under authority of Father Dominic, gave me so great a disgust to all their religion, that it needed not my father's scepticism and smiles to confirm it.

There remains but one person more to be described, in order to let you into the interior life of our family. My mother, and Father Dominic together, would not let us have any governess but a Roman Catholic; and after a great deal of difficulty in getting my father to consent to our having a foreigner, for he thought us in many respects only too

foreign already, they reduced the question to this: Was it better to have an Irish Catholic or a foreigner? The Irish my father rejected at once, on account of her small accomplishments in languages, and finally agreed to taking a Westphalian Catholic, who was highly instructed, and promised to be a more agreeable companion to my mother than the other could have been.

Madame Catherine de Vlotho, a widow, was about five-and-thirty, of agreeable exterior and manners, and educated in all foreign accomplishments. She had been for some years, in company with an aunt, sub-governess in a large Bohemian family, with whom they had occasionally travelled; but had principally resided in Prague and Vienna. She had, therefore, seen more variety than most young governesses; and made herself so charming

in our eyes, as a companion in our games, as well as a teacher of our lessons, that Iris and I became speedily and warmly attached to her: indeed, she acquired such a hold on our affections, that we confided our little secrets, confessed our little faults, far more readily to her than to our parents, or to the confessor. Though apparently as much devoted to religion as either of them, she never obtruded the subject; and my father, who never thought upon that subject, but as of any other scheme of moral philosophy, found her the most sensible of Roman Catholics, and the most discreet of governesses.

Such was our household; and, blessed as we were with everything needful or ornamental in this life, our circle was generally most agreeable. We little ones had no cares, and we were not sharp enough to see, or wise

enough to suspect that there were cares among our elders.

Before entering, however, upon the period when a darkened horizon first shadowed the bright promise of the morning of my life, I must recal to you, what perhaps you have heard and forgotten, that my father's and mother's marriage was really a love-match. Being every way suited to each other, according to notions current in the world, because they were both rich, handsome, noble, and young, one only obstacle interposed itself to their union—the difference of religion. My father, in his own secret mind, would have less scrupled to leave the one than to adopt the other; but the idea of public recantation seemed to his mind a moral cowardice, of which he, his family, and nation, would have cause to be ashamed, and it revolted him.

Great was the opposition they had to conquer, on the part of the Anselmi family, of the priests, and even of the Papal Government; which was only appeased, and dispensation granted, through the interest and address of Father Dominic.

It was only by my mother's promising to educate her children as Catholics, and to become doubly bound, as a devoted daughter of the Church, in employing her future fortune and influence in England to the furtherance of Papal designs, that the adroit Father Dominic obtained the requisite leave to celebrate the wedding. I should add, that such were the offers he made in her name to the Cardinals, and to which he bound my poor devoted mother by all the mysteries and powers of the confessional. The first use he made of his newly-acquired

power was to exact from her a nomination of himself as chaplain and director to the family, in order to wield their influence in England.

For many years my parents continued to live in uninterrupted happiness: the priest, occupied with his deep designs, gave no symptoms as yet of the trouble he was ultimately to occasion. At length, as I have heard, about the time of my birth, moved by some cause which was not apparent, but probably resulting from the total want of success which he experienced in endeavouring to turn my father's credit or influence to a political or religious account, he began covertly to sap the foundations of our domestic happiness. The strong sense of my father being proof against his machinations, the artful monk addressed himself to my amiable and accomplished,

though certainly weak-minded, mother, and insinuated his doubts as to the propriety of her marriage with a heretic. He dwelt on the original impropriety of the match, and scrupled not to declare that, had it been proposed during less revolutionary times, and when the Papal power was less exposed to liberal influence, the Holy See would never on any account have granted the dispensation in its favour. He even hinted that the duty of a faithful daughter of the Church ought to induce her to try to break the marriage, and that the vocation of a saint, which he knew my mother aimed at, would, on its dissolution, call her, as by the voice of Heaven, to take the veil in some secluded nunnery of Italy.

Her still unextinguished regard for my father, and yet more, her maternal feeling for her daughters, whom she could not bear to

leave to the implied stain of doubtful legitimacy, roused my mother to resistance. She at once courageously refused to consent to such a step, and the insidious confessor found it prudent to discontinue his busy and unwelcome remonstrances.

He had done, however, but too much. He perfectly succeeded in casting doubt over the mind of my mother, and had the satisfaction, such as it may be to minds of that stamp, of embittering the union of two persons who had hitherto been as happy as mortals are permitted to be.

Such was the state of things in which my early childhood was passed. My father at that time began to suspect the manœuvres of Father Dominic, and became evidently estranged from him; but, unfortunately, that did not mend matters with regard to my

mother. She, from long habit, from superstitious fear, and perhaps from ignorance of monkish craft, still continued to believe the wily Jesuit her friend, and to treat him with the same attention as heretofore, only evidently becoming more in awe of him. He, quickly perceiving this, insisted more and more upon her guilt, imposing upon her frequent penances, and painful rites and observances, which I remember her practising to the day of her death, which they contributed to hasten. Insensibly all this intrigue led to what Father Dominic had at heart—the gradual estrangement between husband and wife; while my poor mother, unable to resist or to remedy the growing evil, sank gradually under her affliction. I was then seven years old, and Iris fourteen. I remember the last year perfectly well, when I observed my

mother invariably shudder at the approach of her evil genius. I cannot tell you how I learnt to abhor that man. His serpent-like softness, and with it his serpent-like wisdom, gave me an antipathetical feeling towards all religions that I never got over. I loved my mother, but she never could get me to enter warmly into her worship, principally because I saw it was also Father Dominic's.

My mother's health now grew rapidly worse, and was not a little injured by the rigorous fasts which she, or rather her confessor, imposed upon herself. I was a frequent witness to these scenes, and was myself sometimes compelled to take part, with my sister, in the nightly prayer services, which were regularly celebrated in my mother's little oratory, at Rainham. I was so overdone with prayers and observances, that

since that time I have never entered the room. My calm and placid sister, to whom everything came alike, and who, in her outward deportment, could so school and command both her mind and features, as to make place and occupation almost indifferent to her, went through all the tedious ceremonies as if she liked them—a sort of complaisance I could never either adopt or counterfeit.

Iris, without being a hypocrite, was blessed with such an impassible temper, or rather such unimpressionable feelings, that she could steadily go through with things that I well knew to be against her taste, which would have revolted me in five minutes. She was therefore, as may be supposed, a greater favourite in the sick chamber than myself. Not that I shunned it, on the contrary, the

more I saw Iris endeared to our parents, the more I wished to excel her in all the careful attentions my mother stood in need of. But my hastiness, and little accommodating manner as a child, were sufficient to ensure my failure as a nurse; and I often retired to my room vexed with myself, cross with Iris, and out of humour with everybody. My wretched education as to character did not enable me to correct my faults, and nobody else took pains with me. Madame de Vlotho at that time was entirely occupied with Iris, as the most forward and most promising pupil, and I was left to silence and tears.

To all this mismanagement, of which I have only slowly and of late become in some degree sensible (for it is with difficulty one can recal and readjust the feelings, and even the facts, of childhood), I attribute, in great

measure, my subsequent ill health and nervous sensibility to external impressions. When one really begins to see clearly into one's own character, it is like looking back upon life from the next world.

My mother, to her last hour, was kind to me, and liked to see me near her, but she preferred taking everything from the hand of Iris. I was too young to understand, not too young to feel. The intelligence and readiness of the elder, naturally enough made her services the more acceptable; I was foolish enough to see nothing but the preference, and my heart grew cold to Iris, as if she had wilfully wronged me.

My father's affection at this trying time seemed to have revived, he was carefully attentive to my mother, and kind to us, but always avoided the presence of Father Do-

minic. I heard him in after-life say, that the clever knowledge of the world exhibited by the officious priest, during the first years of their intimacy, constantly recurred to his mind, after Father Dominic had changed his play and taken up the tone of bigotry and superstition; and that the double character disgusted him more than the unsuitableness of either line to his clerical vocation. My father had no love for priests, still less for Jesuits, to whose society it turned out afterwards the reverend father was secretly affiliated; neither was he shocked at worldliness by itself in any class. But his natural good taste could not endure the compromise between the service of two masters—a bargain between God and Mammon.

While we all were in the greatest suspense about my mother, Iris and I were

suddenly summoned to receive our grandmother on the terrace of the Abbey. The evening was drawing to a close, and the magnificent view across the park, towards the broad and distant valleys of Suffolk, was heightened by one of the most brilliant sunsets I ever saw. It might have served as a model for a Claude. The streams of light descending between the rugged and gnarled boughs of the aged oaks, the golden and transparent hue imparted to their foliage, the rich tints of the verdant turf melting into the soft purple of the liquid distance, all this gave a soothing but melancholy tint to the scene around, which was in harmony with the feelings of our minds within.

Gladly would I have exchanged the formal reception we momentarily expected, for liberty to roam about the park in this

delicious twilight; for young as I was, and generally very lively, I yet loved the strong contrasts of girlish spirits, and deep solitude and contemplation. I was, moreover, sensible of some great impending event: I had thought little of death, but I had already those nervous susceptibilities, which are often called presentiments, and which are, doubtless, combined with other mysterious causes, the groundwork of much and various superstition.

CHAPTER V.

"Oh, ye who are sae gude yoursel;
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell,
Your neebor's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied with store o'water;
The heapit napper's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in;
And what's aft mair than a' the lave,
Your better art o' hiding."

BURN'S ADDRESS TO THE UNCO' GUDE.

THE sinking sun had just gilded with a

ray of fire the tall turrets of Rainham Abbey, when a carriage drove up, and the Dowager Lady Rainham was announced.

I will not dwell upon her appearance, I shall say enough of her, and of her friend, Miss Grimscourt, afterwards. Iris was deputed by my father to accompany her to her apartment, whither he soon followed them. Miss Grimscourt remained to sup with the priests, the two governesses, and myself.

I never thoroughly made out why, on this occasion, I was not allowed to attend my grandmother as well as Iris, but I saw the preference given to her with a degree of secret displeasure, which I am sure gave the tone to much of my feeling towards her during the whole of many future years.

The great hall and long corridors of the Abbey were to me now more gloomy than ever; for some time past, as if by common consent, the inmates and servants had kept the house quieter than ever, as if in hourly expectation of the melancholy event that every one foresaw must come. Now, the sudden and rather noisy irruption of strangers and servants at once put everything in the household out of its usual course, and viewed, in connection with thoughts of illness and death, it appeared to me so completely out of time, place, and keeping with the sad event we were expecting, that it gave me a sickening feeling of disgust that I could not conceal.

The governesses, if I may call Valérie one, were kind to me, and prevented, as far as possible, my independent manners from

making too strong an impression on our new visitors.

I have hardly, as yet, made any mention of our governess, Madame de Vlotho: quiet, and ladylike, she attempted little active direction of our minds, but exerted a steady control over my sister and me in all our childish misdemeanors. We were both of us much attached to her, and I believe I owe what little self-possession and force of mind I possess entirely to her teaching. The polish of her foreign manners, so conciliating and respectful to all the elders of our family, so kind and endearing to us, shone out with the utmost lustre of contrast to the conceited haughtiness of my over-righteous grandmother, and her more condescending, puritanical friend; and, though so young, I remember to have been ashamed of the comparison.

Madame de Vlotho was a widow, and had seen much of the troubles of Germany in her youth, and had found some difficulty in making her way to England, in which country she hoped to find an asylum for life. She had brought with her a young girl, daughter of a French family in humble life, with whom she had become acquainted in times of distress, and this girl, Valérie, was at that time my attendant, and only real friend and companion in the world. Iris, lovely and highly educated as she was, resembled me too little to be my friend. Always a standard of comparison with whom I was to be measured, she became to me rather an object of jealousy than affection. She listened to Miss Grimscourt's lectures on the sinfulness of everything indifferent, or even innocent in our eyes, with the greatest patience, whilst I could not endure

them. In short, Iris was perfection—I was condemned and a reprobate.

Among her other studies, Iris was devoted to astronomy. A pavilion, which you know very well, in the park at Rainham, had been fitted up for her as an observatory, and was well furnished with instruments. My father, who spared no expense in purchasing new or improved instruments, or models of machinery, and other useful inventions, selected himself all those destined for Iris, and took a pleasure in assisting her in her observations, and in helping, or teaching her to work the more difficult problems. Tall, pale, calm, and ethereal, she might truly have personified the Queen of Night on issuing from that temple of science wherein she read the abstruse laws of the heavens. When not accompanied by my father, she was usually attended by our

respectable tutor, Dr. Buchanan, a most learned, and deeply-read, scientific scholar, whom my father had invited to live with him, more as a friend than as a dependent.

Dr. Buchanan was a tall, grey-headed man, much past the middle age, whose very countenance and appearance gave the idea of abstract science. A profound scholar, a thorough mathematician, and a worthy and humane citizen of the world, he was ready to assist every one from the stores of his erudition, without imposing on any the onus of accepting either his philosophical or his religious opinions, which, in fact, were little known to anybody.

The supper, at last, took place; and then only had I an opportunity of seeing, for the first time, what sectarian bitterness and animosity can effect in distorting the hearts

and understandings of otherwise well-educated people. Young as I was, I shall never forget the first meeting of Miss Grimscourt with the priests, whom, in a private whisper to my grandmother, I had heard her designate as the enemy.

I had forgotten to mention that, at my mother's earnest request, Father Dominic had invited two Roman Catholic dignitaries to visit her, not having foreseen the possibility of having a Calvinistic party to entertain them with. And a great diversion it must have been to the Reverend Fathers, if I may judge from the amusement which I derived from it myself.

Spiritual pride is in itself so odious, and has in accusation been so liberally heaped by one Church party upon another, that it is difficult to say where the strongest imputa-

tion of it rests. I, who have been all my life an impartial and not very friendly observer of all churches and sects, must say, that on that memorable night, the low church party seemed to me much the least humble. The priests, on the contrary, laid aside all their lofty airs, and spoke, though not willingly, on religious topics, yet with all the occasional charity of the most polished and well-bred of their creed.

Miss Grimscourt, the while, dressed in an unbecoming blue-grey, which served to make her naturally sallow complexion assume a deadlier hue than before, employed herself in eating much and talking more, as if she were a chosen vessel to disseminate the Gospel to the elect. Between her mouthfuls, or rather platefuls, she held forth upon the sinfulness of fasting, in which

she was certainly sincere. She descanted on the wicked world we live in, the lamentably small number of those that serve the Lord, of which small number she and her pious friend, Lady Rainham, were undoubtedly two chosen souls. She absurdly tried to convince the reserved and high-bred ecclesiastics of the privilege her little select conventicle enjoyed in sitting under the ministry of the godly Mr. Ebenezer Eliason, one, in whom is no guile. He it was who made their ways straight and their calling and election sure. "For," emphatically, said she, "I consider myself as sure of my salvation as that I sit here."

The enemy were so well-bred and silent, that the voluble lady thought she had achieved a victory, and never discovered her next neighbour to be—her greatest horror—a

monk! But enough of her for the present.

As for my grandmother, I had never heard her name mentioned but as a Calvinist, which, in our house, was synonymous with everything severe and repulsive. She did not disappoint my expectations. She came now, in her notions of exclusive holiness, to watch the dying movements of, at least, a sincere believer, as if her presence could be of utility to one who did not share her own puritanical doctrines. The redoubtable Miss Grimscourt was a follower of the sect, whose business was to enlarge upon and exaggerate the opinions of her patroness in her presence, and in her absence to eulogize her perfections. She evidently did not at all approve of either of our governesses. Madame de Vlotho was ignorant of the vast and essential dif-

ferences between Presbyterians and Anabaptists, Wesleyans and Whitfieldians, and Valérie she thought too young and giddy (though, in fact, a modest, yet animated girl) to be entrusted with any branch of education whatever.

Valérie, in truth, had all the light and natural vivacity of a French girl, combined with a steadiness beyond her years. Her attachment to me was unbounded, and has continued unalterable through life.

At last we were informed by a hurried message from the upper apartments that my poor mother's state was rapidly growing worse; and the priests first, and afterwards myself, with the governesses, were summoned to her ante-chamber.

Worldly and philosophical as I may have been thought since, and little as I had even

then imbibed the habitual superstition of our Church, I confess I cannot even now, as I am writing, look back to that moment without a shudder. We were about to lose her whose heart had ever been devoted to her children, though the narrow circle in which her mind had been permitted to move, thanks to the Jesuits, had ill fitted her for the active or educational duties of a parent. I now see all this, and repent the hasty and undutiful feelings which my headstrong youth sometimes led me into towards her.

Father Dominic, with all the assumed authority of a spiritual counsellor, aided by the innate disposition of his nature, now affected to rule my mother's apartment. None were allowed to approach or to enter it without his permission; and he even endea-

voured to exclude my father from her chamber.

In this attempt he did not succeed; my father, taking my sister and myself with him, placed us by her side. In feeble accents she bid him her last farewell: perfectly aware as she was of her hopeless state, and inwardly consoled by the aid of her religion, she calmly confided us to his especial care, saying little about me, whose future (I was then eight years old) was far beyond her ken; but much about Iris, her darling—her lily, as she was wont to call her. Iris was then fourteen; and I knew that her education, for the next important years of her life, had deeply engaged my mother's attention. She then kissed us both, and said something in a whisper to my father, which I think related to our being kept steadfast in

her religion, for she pointed to that little picture of the Crucifixion, which, from her memory, and not from my superstition, has ever been my favourite, and sunk exhausted by the effort.

My father was deeply affected, and only by an exertion answered audibly: "I will, I promise," which my mother undoubtedly heard and understood, for she smiled peacefully, and tremulously moved her hand towards him. He imprinted on it kisses and tears.

However unsuited in many respects, my father and mother had never swerved from the love, faith, and affection in which they had early been united.

Some signal was now made by an attendant, and the priests entered. My father, who knew his remaining during this last rite

of the Church would but disturb my mother's dying moments, allowed himself to be drawn away: we were suffered to remain. This great distinction was made in our favour as supposed sharers in all their superstition: how far that was from the truth I need hardly inform you.

Certainly, I had no inward feeling, nor much outward show, of attachment to my mother's religion; but, in spite of this lukewarmness, and of the positive dislike I had imbibed, in common with my father, to the priests, I was touched at this last, this parting solemnity of the Church on earth. If it have no other value, the calm serenity, the holy peace it seemed to impart to my dying mother, was, in my eyes, sufficient to make it a redeeming quality to the abject superstition

of the assistants. Such is the sacrament of extreme unction to the faithful Roman Catholic.

When all was over, we were, of course, removed from the chamber of death; and then I remember the first great contrast between Iris and myself became apparent. She, with all her powers of mind devoted to the subduing of outward signs of grief, earnestly demanded to be conducted to her father; once in his presence, she tried, by her own composure, to calm the poignancy of his sorrows. I, on the contrary, after giving way to a childish and passionate outburst of affectionate feeling, was conveyed, by the tender care of Valérie, to my room, where I cried myself to sleep, amid dreams of alternate heaven and horror. I felt, though I certainly, at that age, could not have expressed

the thought, I felt already that my opportunity was gone for ever for making my heart and individual self understood by any kind, endearing parent or friend in this world. In a word, I foresaw at once my fate to be misunderstood through life. Such has been, alas! the case; and as the ill-appreciated are always severely judged, I see clearly that all my subsequent unhappiness is mainly traceable to the early bereavement of a mother's love.

She was gone! That mother who, had she lived, would doubtless have gradually warmed in her affection towards me, as she would have seen my talents and character become worthy her care and attention; she would then have revived the early impressions of her originally good education, and would have exerted herself effectually for the development of my youthful understanding.

The funeral was so arranged that the Roman Catholic rites having been performed in the great hall of the Abbey, the last earthly remains of my poor mother should be duly deposited in the chapel, which was the established resting-place of the family.

This chapel, which was a remnant of the Abbey Church, had been most fortunately preserved in all its pristine integrity. Itself a work of the finest period of art—namely, the thirteenth century—it was also adorned, without being filled, with various monuments of the Rainham family. The tall, graceful windows were constructed with the purest taste of Gothic flowing tracery, and transmitted a dim and solemn light through the magnificent remains of painted glass which ornamented them. The high, arched roof of sculptured oak, here and there gilded, as has

been the case in most of the Suffolk churches, was hung with time-worn banners and arms of the Rainhams; while the pavement, variegated with monastic tiles and ancient tombstones, bore strong witness to the frequent tread of feet and knees of holy pilgrims in days of yore.

The massive beams of the roof sprang boldly from figures of angels, strongly projected into light from the deep shade that relieved their graceful outlines from behind; whilst in a niche, on the gospel side of the altar, the statue of the first Abbot, which had wonderfully escaped the ravages of time and of the Puritans, stood with its hand raised, in the attitute of benediction over the faithful in the choir below. On the opposite, or epistle side, a corresponding niche, with fretted canopy, exhibited a

figure of a Baron Rainham, founder of the Abbey, in complete armour, with his shield duly emblazoned with his arms. Below these protecting guardians of the Abbey, was the spot chosen by my mother herself for her earthly repose, at a respectful distance from the altar.

It was only the fortuitous existence of these figures, together with one of St. Ernulphus, patron of the Abbey, over the altar itself, that reconciled the priests to the interment taking place at all, in what they considered as a desecrated place of worship.

They had previously taken care that all the few Roman Catholics of the neighbourhood, who were well known to them, should attend, as well as some foreigners, of whom there were always some in habits of intimacy,

or of correspondence, with my mother. They had also got together a strong choir from the Roman Catholic chapels in that part of England, and gave the De Profundis and the Requiem, the Dies Iræ and the rest of their ritual for the dead, with an effect and apathos that quite overcame the whole assemblage.

My father's fine figure as chief mourner, especially when the procession moved into the chapel, struck every one. The moving torches, the quantity of lighted tapers gleaming to the roof, the solemn music, made a sensible and nervous impression on me I shall never forget, but which my reason did not respond to. I wept, I felt, I was moved deeply, the action was violent on my nerves, but no reaction of mind replied to it. I was not a bad or unfeeling girl, but in

all my agitation, I say it, I recognised no God.

I will not stop to moralize. Iris and I were not supposed to form part of the scene, but we were there in a corner apart, with Valérie and Madame de Vlotho, all, of course, in the deepest mourning. Iris was incapable of controlling her feelings, because she felt the religion of the sacred rites and ceremonies. I knew her thoughts, though she sparingly confided them to me. She was thinking of her father, and his future solitary life. She felt herself an orphan.

Miss Grimscourt, out of sheer curiosity, put her head in once to see how the enemy conducted these matters; but, on seeing the priests, the tapers, and, above all, the large cross on the sable pall that covered the coffin, she made a sudden retreat from the enemy's

country. Hearing the sad but solemn chanting of the choir, she exclaimed: "These are not the hymns of our chapel," and hastened to report all these horrors to the Dowager Lady Rainham. She had charitably made up her mind that we were all doomed to everlasting perdition, and retired to rest more satisfied than ever that no good came of living in old Abbeys, and, above all, that nobody served the Lord out of her own parish. In what county or diocese that might be, I never inquired; determined, if ever I found it out, to turn my steps the other way.

The account which Miss Grimscourt brought to my grandmother, of what she termed the nefarious and heretical perversion of our Christian privileges to worse than heathenish purposes (this lady was in the

habit of dealing in unmeasured terms), induced her to make a singular proposal to my father. This was no less than to take bodily possession of my poor sister Iris, carry her off to her own dull Calvinistic home, and educate her in the only true religion, namely, her own. Not a word was said about me; and I am only too thankful that the superior attractions of my elder sister were the means of saving me from the offer.

My father, however, steadfastly refused; his recent promise to my mother could not in honour be tampered with; and if his daughters were to be exposed to the risks of an ultra-religious education, he rather preferred the Catholic to the Methodist.

The ladies soon after took their departure, and returned to dogmatise and drill their own unhappy Sunday-schools, and edify their

neighbours with histories of the Popish family at Rainham Abbey. We were all, according to them, going to the dogs, and much further, our own way; it was a sin to see the poor children left in spiritual darkness and ignorance of their privileges of entering such societies as the evangelical coterie at Lady Rainham's; and my father, it was shocking to think of him. For aught he cared, the Abbey was an Abbey still: they had seen abbots and monks, and all their superstitious devices, in the midst of a nominal Protestant family. Miss Grimscourt prophesied we should come to a bad end, here and hereafter.

Their retreat was shortly followed by that of the priests, unregretted by the whole household. My father henceforth determined to keep all ecclesiastical interference

from either party at a distance. What I chiefly remember of all this is, that I gained a degree of liberty I had never before enjoyed; and that the bigotry of the two sects made such an equal impression upon my youthful mind, that I have since impartially avoided both of them. What each said *of* the other, might equally have been said *by* the other, with a mutual interchange of the characteristic sectarian jargon.

My father, after a short time, occupied his thoughts with plans for a splendid monument, to be erected to my mother's memory: the parishioners, to whom she was endeared by character and benevolence, which overcome all differences of religion, petitioned to have it erected in the parish church, which is now yours; but my father, though much touched by this simple and honest expression

of truly Christian sympathy, as contrasted with the fanaticism of the two virulent sectarian parties he had so lately been engaged with, thought it better to avoid remarks, and perhaps a discussion, with the then parson, who was not so tolerant a man as you, Henry.

He designed himself a stately monument, of the finest Italian marbles, ornamented with statues emblematic of the Virtues, with all their attributes, to be sculptured by the first artists in London. He himself composed the epitaph, in beautiful English verse, and in the most classical Latin, in which there was a true and amiable character of his wife, a pathetic vein of poetical expression, and not one word of any description of religion.

From this moment, a new light seemed to open to me; from this moment, my per-

sonal recollections of people and things seem properly to begin. Childhood can certainly recollect some few things from very early days; but the difficulty of confirming or substantiating those early efforts of memory, and the readiness with which events repeated to children are afterwards believed by them to have actually passed before their eyes, render such reminiscences of very doubtful authenticity. Several circumstances, however, contributed to engrave this important period of my life indelibly on my memory.

Although I had every reason to rejoice that my grandmother's plan for educating one of us after her own fashion had fallen to the ground, yet I could not be blind to the fact that my sister had been preferred to me. That single circumstance was enough to embitter our relations to each other, and to make

my young mind retreat within itself, and brood over its supposed wrongs in gloom and silence. Not that I wished to be the victim of a stiff old lady's caprices, or to endure the penance of a Methodistical school-room, whither neither the amiable Madame de Vlotho, nor my beloved Valérie, would have been allowed to attend me; but my sister, as was natural, had been thought of before me, and that idea rankled in my heart.

I was then but eight years old, Iris scarcely fourteen. She, from the privilege of age, as well as from the greater consideration her progress entitled her to, was almost a woman, or treated as one; I, still a neglected, but high-spirited, child.

My feelings had been more than once irritated, by observing in how unceremonious a manner my father was, on certain occasions,

treated by the priests: courtly and flattering at ordinary times, they would, when their religion was concerned, become resolutely haughty and uncompromising. This had been remarkably the case when they had peremptorily refused him the entrance to my mother's chamber, after extreme unction; a time, when all worldly cares being left behind, and all future ones, as far as religious consolation teaches, being smoothed away, he thought the claims of his, the nearest earthly tie, might be entitled to remain unsevered to the last. But no, Jesuitism forbade it, and he would not disturb her last moments by contesting it. He felt it, nevertheless, deeply, and this it was, I think, which led him to introduce into her monument a figure of the most aërial grace, representing Psyche just escaping from the detention of a serpent;

embodying in this classical shape, at once his own philosophical idea of the soul, and his notion of the wily subtleties which beset it, under the most specious disguises on earth.

These last duties performed, our whole tenor of life changed, as I will proceed to inform you in the following pages.

CHAPTER VI.

"Les stoiques disent; rentrez au-dedans de vous mêmes. C'est là où vous trouverez votre repos. Et cela n'est pas vrai; des autres disent, sortez dehors cherchez le bonheur en vous divertissant. Et cela n'est pas vrai. Les maladies viennent; le bonheur n'est ni dans nous, ni hors de nous. Il est en Dieu, et en nous."

PASCAL.

I HAVE sufficiently informed you of the state of our family affairs down to the period of the death of our lamented mother, to make it evident that the change which was about to ensue was as total as could well be conceived.

My father had been of late so tormented by one or the other extreme of religious fanaticism, that prejudiced as he already was against priestcraft in general, nothing more was wanting to induce him to declare open war against all ecclesiastical systems, and their officious interference in any shape whatsoever. Nevertheless, as a man of strict honour, and guided by a sense of his last promise to his wife, he made no objection to the continuance of our education as Roman Catholics, nor to the regular observances of that creed on the part of Madame de Vlotho and of Valérie.

In the meantime, no pains were spared to advance and perfect our mental cultivation. We had the best masters, and our father, who was well qualified for the task, took a peculiar pleasure in watching our progress in the

usual studies of our age, and in drawing forth what seemed to be in each the predominant taste or talent of our minds. He had been himself so much of a cosmopolite, and mixed in such various societies at home and abroad, that he was able at once to interest us by his information, and to encourage us by pointing out the objects to which our studies were directed. This, indeed, is a point very much neglected in the common routine of education; the young are taught the rudiments of all branches of knowledge, but it is usually left to them to apply the means placed in their hands.

As we grew up, we benefited by the intellectual society which my father constantly assembled around him, and our tastes were formed, and our talents developed by the frequent intercourse we had with the first

characters of the day, whether in politics, literature, or art. Both Iris and myself, though far from neglecting literature for its own sake, showed so decided a preference for all that related to science and art, that my father unhesitatingly resolved to allow us full scope to gratify our tastes in that direction, while he reserved to himself the power of directing our readings in the department of pure literature, which he enlightened and embellished by his observations.

Some years rolled on, which were the happiest of my life; not the less so, that I have nothing of peculiar interest to relate concerning them. My sister and I differed considerably in our tastes, she taking to the abstract studies of natural science, I to the more fascinating charms of art. My father had very early indulged her in building a

small, but perfectly well-furnished observatory, to which he now added a pretty little garden and conservatory, the vestibule to which contained a selection of specimens of every branch of natural history.

This was called Iris's Museum, and so completely was she devoted to it, that it was with difficulty she was induced to quit it for the common duties of society, or the superintendence of her father's house. Dr. Buchanan was still there, guiding her astronomical researches, conducting her through the mazes of mathematics, and thinking her at last to be little less than a celestial being, called down from the spheres above as a witness to the transcendent powers of his own profound philosophy.

I, on the other hand, devoted myself almost exclusively to music: the only exact

science that I could bear was that of mathematics, because it led me to the deep-seated mysteries where lie the principles of divine harmony, and in this I was a perfect enthusiast.

Valérie devoted herself to me exclusively; sometimes a teacher, at others a companion, we grew to love each other with a degree of affection not always to be found between sisters. The secret of this was that we had no jealousies. Her position, as well as character, removed any such idea; and she was so proud and so gratified by my progress in every accomplishment or mental acquirement, that, if vanity be my failing in any degree, I must lay it to the charge of Valérie's unsparing commendations.

My music master was a Dr. Isaac Mendoza, a Portuguese Jew, well instructed in the

old Italian and German schools of music. He gave me a severe taste in the art, which I have always retained in spite of the paltry taste now prevalent in England.

I will not detain you with our progress through these last years of our education, although they comprehend so great a portion of my life. I have lived, it seems, far longer in less time, in half the number of years elapsed since that period.

In so large a house as Rainham Abbey, it was easy for my father to give each of us a separate and complete apartment. We had each a sitting-room, opening into the picture-gallery, which to me, who delight in all the manifold ways of conveying soul and passion to the minds of men, was a supreme enjoyment. I once told my father, who surprised me in a deep reverie, as I contemplated a

lovely painting of Coreggio, in which a most graceful dance of nymphs was represented with the glowing yet harmonious colouring characteristic of that master, that it was *music to the eyes*—an expression that so highly delighted him, that I date from that day his altered and increased estimation of me, which I never afterwards forfeited. It was singular that Iris, though capable of employing great powers of mind in abstruse science, indefatigable in calculation as in investigation, had no value for the mind itself, or the powers and progress of the human race. She used the mind as an instrument to get at facts, but cared neither for it nor its qualities when not in use. It was her tool, her machine, hardly a part of herself. It follows that she had the utmost distaste to everything metaphysical.

Iris, regardless of the sensation her growing beauty excited among the society that frequented Rainham Abbey, employed herself assiduously in the preparation of a work upon the yet uninvestigated distances between some of the stars, and listened only to such conversation as could assist her in the prosecution of her favourite studies. Seated in her observatory on some brilliant starlight night, and sweeping the heavens with her telescope, she seemed the impersonation of some celestial spirit descended from one of those bright spheres which formed the object of her devotion. To her this life was religion, philosophy, love—everything: her calm and abstract nature asked no more. Her very form was the type of that marble beauty we attribute to the Queen of Night,

cold and statue-like, and equally adapted to an earthly or a lunar orb.

She was the especial favourite of Madame de Vlotho, who was proud of her acquirements, and by nature far better adapted to her than Valérie. We had thus each of us a companion fitted to our respective dispositions, and you will imagine easily that the family moved on in harmony, if not in unison.

What was I doing all this while? you will naturally ask. I will tell you. I was cultivating music with the utmost diligence, endeavouring to master all its difficulties, both of composition and execution; and, at the same time, of studying all the few characters that my still youthful position gave me an opportunity of meeting, for the pur-

pose of forming a correct idea of the human mind. I early formed a design of diving deep into the dispositions and motives of mankind, and, not satisfied with my sister's tranquil pleasure at the discovery of material phenomena, I bent all my powers towards the intellectual and moral world. She was content to know *how* anything happened; I was never so, unless I knew *why* it happened. My father's philosophy, also, tended very much this way, and in silence and reflection I pursued my day dreams, and resolved, truly or falsely, my knotty problems. My voice was not neglected: no musician can be perfect without the power of softly, but correctly, expressing his musical ideas to himself; mine being a contralto of considerable power, drew great admiration from our society. This sort of success was what I principally enjoyed; I

was first in my art, the incense of praise was not lost on me; and in this line there could be no jealousy between me and my sister. The studies of history and general literature pleased me not; but if I saw the portrait of a hero, the statue of a philosopher, then the personal interest in the man, the desire I had to emulate the fame of any one, all conspired to give me a taste for the history of the one, or the philosophy of the other. Beethoven in music, Raphael in painting, Michael Angelo in sculpture, these were my idols; I would fain have celebrated each resplendent genius after my own fashion, respectively in his peculiar art, and my bold flights at one time actually commenced a musical hymn to Beethoven, and contemplated, as soon as I should be sufficiently advanced, a painting (allegorical) in honour

of Raphael, and a classical group in commemoration of Michael Angelo.

I now come to a period which you, Henry, must remember as well as myself: though at the age at which I then was, every arrival at the Abbey was a novelty, the visit of a cousin, whom I had rarely seen before, was an event that far exceeded in interest the comings and goings of our common guests.

You came to pass the Christmas vacation at Rainham, fresh from Oxford, whither you were only to return for a few months, for the purpose of a degree, after which you were expected by my father, your guardian, to make choice of a profession for life. You may imagine with what mingled feelings of expectation and curiosity your two cousins looked forward to your visit at the Abbey. Though we had seldom met, I was tolerably

well acquainted with you; at least, I thought so, by my father's description of you, which may have been biassed by his affection for your late mother, his half-sister, but which did not the less incline us to give you a favourable reception. Iris might then be fairly considered as launched in the world, as far, at least, as with her tastes she chose to be so; but to me, who had hitherto only seen the world in a distant perspective, your arrival was an occurrence of no small moment.

I was occupied in the picture-gallery, attempting to copy a lovely "Holy Family," by Murillo, the master whose exquisite simplicity and nature has always made him my favourite, when my father, who generally superintended this part of my studies, was informed of your having arrived.

I was left, therefore, for some time alone

in the gallery; and, as usual, when left to my own reflections, I tried to analyze the causes of the different impressions awakened in us by the different styles of art. On either side of the Murillo hung paintings of other Spanish masters, a noble portrait of a "Castilian Grandee," by Velasquez, and a bold composition of the "Return of Columbus from America," by Alonzo Cano. Opposite to these were placed the softer works of the Italian school, mostly upon historical or classical subjects. You will easily account for this choice, but as a history of art, it is as impossible to exclude all religious subjects from a collection of pictures, as it would be to form a library of history and philosophy, with the omission of what relates to religion and the Church. The human mind has many sides, and, think what you will of them, those sub-

jects must have their place in any comprehensive view of the history and progress of the human race. It is of little use to view man as he is, without passing in review the varying phases of man as he has been.

Sculpture was also one of my favourite arts—as, to my mind, embodying more of material and tangible reality than the mere representations of painting.

One of the pictures in our gallery which, doubtless, you will remember, was known by the name of the "Confessional." The painter's name was unknown, but the work itself bespoke a conception of the highest genius. It was of some ancient Gothic school, of the first revival of art, and though placed in the Spanish series, it always struck me as being rather more in the style of early Roman painting. Often have I looked at it with

intense attention, till wrapt in the romance I figured to myself as its interpretation, I turned away with a shudder from the harrowing ideas it gave rise to. What an awful engine is that of the confessional to be wielded by man! How it makes one fear the power, and hate the instrument! Father Dominic, as long as he ruled in the house, would never let us look at that picture.

The subject was one of great simplicity, but of tremendous expression. A woman kneeling, or rather throwing herself recklessly forward, endeavoured in vain to catch the gown of a monk, who fled from her in horror. His features were so much concealed by his hands in which his face was buried, that their expression could only be guessed, not seen; a fine idea of the artist, who knew how very far feeling goes beyond the power of the

pencil. The woman's countenance, which was beautiful as far as the violence of agitation and remorse could allow her natural physiognomy to be judged of, was only visible through a dark but transparent shadow, cast by a veil which she was in the act of raising with one hand, while she sought to detain the priest with the other.

Such was the picture: the composition artless, the outline correct, but hard, the colours dim, the relief and shading but imperfect; yet that painting spoke with more force of truth, and a more intelligible language than the most finished Guidos and Salvators that surrounded it. And yet the name of the painter, whose sublime genius conceived and embodied that scene of horror, is lost to fame and to posterity!

It had once occurred that my father, in

speaking of this picture, had called the monk a Jesuit. I never shall forget the scowl that came over the hard features of Father Dominic at that moment. The offence he seemed to take at this casual phrase was so great, that his habitual self-possession barely enabled him to get over it; and I even think he would have failed in the effort had he not luckily bethought himself to remark, in his driest manner, that the order was not founded till a century after the time, when that audacious painter had dared to meddle with the Church.

But I must return from my digression. You arrived, Henry, and my father led you into the gallery, and introduced you to me. Iris was sent for, and the governesses followed.

I was then fifteen, my sister twenty.

You were, as I was told, about two-and-twenty, fresh from Oxford, where you had gained great credit by your talents and application.

It is a sufficiently great event to a girl of fifteen to see a young man of that age, tall, finely formed, with fair complexion and light hair, Grecian features, high forehead, and determined mouth and expression, enter the room unexpectedly, to cause her to pay rather more than ordinary attention to the appearance of her visitor. How I behaved I know not, but I well remember the entrance of Iris, radiant in all her beauty, cold and composed in manner, full of dignity and self-possession. Her age gave her at once the advantage of woman's beauty, as well as of the superior tact and manner, which even the most engaging children, or mere girls, are

always deficient in. She was indeed admirably fitted to do the honours of her father's house, the perfection of civility and good breeding, distant, yet above trifles, and undistinguishing in her manner to all.

As for my particular position at that period, it was rather singular. Not of an age to be emancipated from tuition, I yet learnt no more than I liked. Idle, yet fond of knowledge, respecting Madame de Vlotho, but not obeying her much, spoilt by Valérie, learning my favourite science from Mendoza, rather as a condescension on my part than a work of instruction on his, I did, it must be owned, follow my inclinations more completely than perhaps ever fell to the lot of a girl of my years before.

Mendoza could hardly be said to teach me, yet I learnt much from him; his deep

science enabled me to pick out all I wanted to learn, while his modest demeanour and indefatigable perseverance in the practice of his art, made him ever ready to yield to my wayward and irregular fits of application. No other professor could have suited me so well, and I think that no other pupil would have excited his musical energies to the pitch that I did, with my alternate genius and industry.

I dare say, however, that you have not entirely forgotten those days, and that Rainham Abbey, then new to you, and your uncle's kindness, made some impression on your memory, whatever the appearance and characters, so strongly contrasted, of your cousins may have done.

Although I confess to a tolerably high estimation of my own abilities, yet it must

not be supposed that I got on entirely without any trouble on my part. I need not describe to you the loss of temper and patience, the floods of tears, the disappointments I felt at not being always capable of conquering difficulties in music at first sight. Thanks, however, to my real love for the art, and the pleasure it gave me, and also the little taste I had for actively occupying myself with any other (though I admired many), I made at last very great progress: thanks also to the equally great perseverance of Mendoza, and to his extraordinary patience with all his wilful pupil's temper and caprices.

He was, indeed, proud of my attainments in his art, and considered, with pardonable vanity, that a good scholar is the best proof of a good teacher.

It is time, however, that I should resume

the thread of my story, and revert to you, whose arrival was at that moment the great, or little, event of the house.

A few days, nay, hours, at that age, is sufficient to make a better acquaintance than years at a later period of life. We soon learnt to know each other, as we thought, well; and the result of my hasty judgment —my opinions were always formed instantaneously—was, in a few words, what I am going to relate.

You began by paying an equal share of attention and civility to each of us, and at first it seemed that the superior prominence of Iris in the family did not prevent you from trying to acquaint yourself quite as intimately with me. But, in a short time, I could perceive that your severe judgment forcibly repressed the rising interest you were begin-

ning to take in me, and some reproofs, which I dare say my wilful, desultory, and unformed character much needed, convinced me that you saw nothing in me, as yet, but a mere child, forward in intellect, perhaps, but backward in manner and the world.

It was but natural that Iris should then prove the principal attraction, both in society, in study, and companionship. You were ever in her observatory, or in that corner of the library where the ponderous tomes which Dr. Buchanan and my sister daily consulted, stood free from any intrusion of mine. You adjusted her telescope, noted her observations, and were the first to proclaim in the family the results of her nightly sweeping of the heavens, and her daily calculations deduced from them. You were each morning in her conservatory, selecting winter-flowers for the

breakfast nosegay, with which Iris was regularly presented on her appearance at the table; in short, your every action showed your appreciation and admiration of my sister. All this was not lost upon me; and, though at my age I had no right to look for attentions, yet my self-love was wounded, and my jealousy awakened to a pitch that you, Henry, who *now* know me, can too easily picture to yourself.

CHAPTER VII.

"Sin, with his sevenfold crown and purple robe,
Begins his triumph in my guilty throne:
There sits he watching, with his hundred eyes,
Our idle minutes and our wanton thoughts;
And with his baits made of our frail desires,
Gives us the hook that hauls our souls to hell."

G. PEELE.

THE idea once taken up that you disliked me, or, rather, that I had failed to retain the small, but evident interest you had shown towards me on your first arrival, it daily gathered strength, and rankled in my heart,

while my mind was not strong enough to reject the feeling. Your earnest and steady devotion to the necessary studies for the profession into which you were about to enter, led you, not unnaturally, to judge all moral and religious questions strictly and, to our notions, severely. My feelings were certainly not sufficiently bigoted to my ostensible form of religion to feel very acutely wounded by your praises of Protestantism, but when the recollection of Miss Grimscourt—the only personification of strict Protestantism I had seen much of—rose in my mind, I detested your Protestantism as much as I had formerly feared and hated the Popery of Father Dominic.

With all this I admired your talent, and acknowledged, though very secretly and silently, the good advice you were continually, as an elder brother rather than as a distant

connexion, bestowing on me, your unworthy cousin. I saw how often you were right—I knew how often I was wrong; and Valérie made the same sort of observations that I did. "Ce monsieur ne fait pas de complimens," she said, "son genre n'est pas celui d'un jeune élégant Français." Iris alone, cold, calm, and reserved, seemed to receive your attentions much as the Diana of the Louvre might listen to the respectful devotions of the Apollo of the Vatican.

Your taste for music was but just then developing itself. You had heard far more and finer music than I had; but it is with some, even of those afterwards most blest with taste for that divine art, that the true feeling is awakened but late. Others again receive it, as it were by inspiration, in early infancy. I often wished, when you were in

a humour to treat me with prose, to exclaim to you in the poetry of Shakespere:

> "When in music we have spent an hour,
> Your lecture shall have leisure for as much."

Such, in short, as I have described, was the state of parties at Rainham in that memorable winter: well and long have I pondered over them.

My observation of the natural ascendancy which my sister seemed to gain over everybody, and principally over yourself, made me endeavour, by all means in my power, to rival her in your estimation. It was no growing passion on my part, it was simply an effect of what I saw, acting upon a most jealous disposition. Had I at that time possessed more insight into character, instead of being a mere enthusiastic girl, I should have seen that you

were far from holding me so cheap as you imagined, and tried to make me believe you were doing. On the contrary, with a little more penetration, I might have seen that even your reproofs and counsels, though somewhat in the Bachelor of Arts' style, were a sign of interest and regard on your part; whether this discovery would have satisfied me or not, is a different question. As it was, my experience did not go that length; and, like a foolish girl, I resented the real kindness of the tutor—forgive the word—because I failed, as I thought, in captivating the attentions of the young man. My silly jealousy rose sometimes in secret to such a pitch, that I hated you—I hated my sister—I hated everybody. In those moods, nothing but the magic powers of sound availed to calm my disorder: music alone was capable of soothing

my irritated feelings, or of giving a turn to thoughts so inimical to my repose of mind.

Sometimes I tried another line of conduct. I tried to win you to my side by the charmed numbers of Mendelsohn or Bach; there, indeed, I had my revenge—my triumph. You were studying for the Church; and, naturally, music was the first, if not the only accomplishment, to which your future calling was adapted. Your voice, Mendoza's direction, and my accompaniment, were enough to enable us to get up some very pretty music, and to bring you to a correct practice and knowledge of chants, chorals, and the better style of hymns and psalmody, which you were intent on introducing into your future church. There, indeed, I had you to myself. I have even, by a touch on the instrument, called you back involuntarily

from following the impassible Iris, who did not care whether you followed her or not.

I conquered you also in another point—in making you ride with me: that I believe really made you feel something towards me. I was then under your care; you protected, rather than followed: my father, too, who usually accompanied us, seemed to sanction our being so much together. Yet, when quite at liberty, you ever in preference sought Iris; and then my burning jealousy returned, and returns now, when I think of it. I hope you endoctrined her with your divinity and your homilies. I hope she gave you some of St. Thomas Aquinas in exchange for Ridley and Latimer. When you brought her the accustomed bouquet from her conservatory, were the camellias and azaleas sweeter for your scholastics?

And sometimes when you left me to gallop alone and inhale the breeze of freedom over our Suffolk downs and heaths, when my eager horse, who seemed to share the passions of his mistress, snuffed the air of liberty and bounded along on the green turf, while you preferred driving Iris in her pony-phaeton to the village, then how I vaunted myself, and vowed enmity to you and to mankind. But as my years increased and my character formed, my father's care and interest in me rose in proportion, and that was a great set-off to my cause, and recalled me from many meditated pranks and follies.

Iris had her own avocations. She was kind to her poor neighbours, especially the sick and infirm. I give her great credit, as I do to all such pains-taking ladies, but I am not one of them. I agree that those who

devote time, talents, and attention to the poor and needy, deserve far more their gratitude than those who only contribute to their aid in money; and to such as go through all such distressing scenes as such personal care and attention implies, the highest praise is due. In a country parish it is, or may be, easy and not distasteful, comparatively speaking, to attend minutely to the poor, to help them in mind and means rather than in money, and to become individually acquainted with their families and their circumstances; but in a town, in London, what resolution, what courage, as well as temper and discretion, is not necessary to those whose benevolence draws them towards the poor.

My charities were always in money, and came in aid of all that Iris, with her more active exertions, did for the cottagers. My

father, on his part, did all that enlightened proprietorship and judicious management can do for an estate. He gave alike to all, whatever their sect or religion. You, I remember, full of your academical notions, offered to read discourses to them, at which my father only smiled.

Schools were left entirely to Iris: I had no talent that way, nor indeed patience for tuition, had my talents been of that sort. The clergyman was then growing very old, and we found that all we did was done better without his assistance, though some of our neighbours, we knew, thought that the Church was not sufficiently considered. Of course, we only despised such observations.

I was not uncharitable in disposition, and always felt for positive woe; but I could never interest myself enough about my fellow-

creatures to care for them *en masse*. I was a philosopher, and therefore more or less a misanthrope in disposition, though not a very mischievous one. I knew pain and wretchedness must exist, and I was most willing to relieve them as far as I could; but why must I witness them? I was thankful to Iris that her inclination took that branch of duty off my hands.

A new event was now spoken of in our family as likely to occur. My father one morning announced to us that he shortly expected a visit from an old friend of his. I supposed I looked all curiosity, for he added: "You, Lamia, know nothing about him, but Iris—" Iris here looked very conscious, which made me immediately suspect something was going on. I knew that

my father looked forward to unite Iris with a gentleman of rank, but small fortune, many years her senior, and the thing had been at times distantly alluded to in the family. Perhaps it had been more nearly settled than I, so much younger than my sister, may have heard of, as there was not much confidence between us.

" Who is coming, papa?" said I.

"My old friend, Lord Helvellyn," he replied. This was enough for me, as I had heard whispers connecting Iris's name and the title of Marchioness together, but was not aware that there was anything yet thought of in earnest. She gave a tacit consent, I suppose, but perhaps consulted the stars and Dr. Buchanan, whom we used to call her astrologer. Henry, I imagine, was not consulted on the occasion.

The Marquis of Helvellyn was a nobleman of ancient lineage, but moderate possessions, his two estates of Caer-Wynn and Pen-y-Rhôl, being all he had to live on, out of the vast property bewteen Carmarthen and Merioneth, once belonging to the family.

You may judge how ill-suited to Iris he was, being only ten years younger than our father. He had seen much of him in Italy, had travelled with him, and now wished to prove his friendship, by giving him his eldest daughter and heiress in marriage.

Lord Helvellyn had filled some diplomatic posts with great distinction, and was already thinking of marrying somebody, preparatory to fixing himself in an embassy he hoped to obtain. He wanted fortune, he wished for beauty, talent, and all the *agrémens*

of an ambassadress, a lady who would shine brilliantly in public, and be equally contented and domestic in private life; one who could understand a little of politics to talk of without meddling in them, and retire at last to the mountain throne of Helvellyn and its lakes, learn the language of the natives, and die, if not live, a Welchwoman.

I think I have pretty well explained to you the state of things in our house at that period. You are not now perhaps aware of it, but there was a time when your manner greatly changed towards me. The long and solitary rides, the little odd *tête-à-tête* conversations, the small familiarities of our cousinhood, were by degrees avoided, then given up on your part in a way of which I, though so young, was vain

and jealous enough to be deeply sensible. You began to seek the society of Iris with greater assiduity: you showed her much stronger marks of affection than me, studying and conversing with her in preference to me, but yet not, as it seemed, with any feeling beyond the affection of a near relation. Yet the preference was there, and that was quite enough for my jealous heart to feed on.

Still more envenomed food did it draw from the circumstance that, Iris began now to show faint but evident traces of a decided preference for you. You know how beautiful she was, how her calm and somewhat inanimate countenance rose with the slightest degree of expression; well, your presence—your attentions, raised that expression, when

nothing else could. Sometimes a delicate blush, like the reflection of sunset on a soft still lake, glows upon her alabaster complexion, and an unwonted light in those eyes—deep-blue, long-lashed eyes—sparkles with a brilliancy excited by no other's presence or conversation. My jealous watchfulness, I believe, discovered this change in Iris, while unseen by the rest of the family. I watched, and nourished my jealousy in secret.

My father at this time went suddenly up to London, to meet his friend and former ward, Lord Helvellyn, just come over on leave of absence from his station abroad.

Lord Helvellyn's father had been a man of great talent and eccentricity, which latter quality he had indulged, much to the injury of his fortune and successor. Having squan-

dered away all but the old family seat of Caer-Wynn, which he jocularly said ought to have been Caer-Lose, to suit his ill-fortune, he one day, in a fit of insanity, brought on by the deeply embarrassed state of his finances, committed suicide. He left one child, a minor, to the guardianship of his friend, Lord Rainham.

My father took a great liking to the youth thus left in his charge. He educated him abroad, in order to prepare him for a diplomatic career, which he considered the best on all accounts for a man of his rank, but small present means, to embrace. The young man took greatly to this plan; and having great natural abilities, and no want of application for their improvement, he succeeded in his studies beyond the most sanguine expectations of his guardian.

When of age, he rose rapidly in his profession, his interests being always carefully looked to by Lord Rainham. Their love for art, their foreign studies, their philosophical ideas, were all so much alike, that although my father was so much the elder of the two, yet he treated his former ward more as a brother than a son. Lord Helvellyn pushed these philosophical tendencies much further than his guardian, and his character, in certain strict circles, was not the more esteemed for it; but on the other hand, the gay, the clever, the witty men of the world, and all that mixed society which is so fascinating abroad, loved and courted him. However, I shall have ample occasion to speak of him and his character hereafter. My father was so complete a specimen of a philosopher himself, that he thought that, after a certain age,

every one was best left alone; therefore, from him Lord Helvellyn certainly received no strictures upon morals or conduct, though my father did not, by example, lead him into any devious paths.

My father's idea of uniting him to his favourite daughter proceeded from his fondness for his society, and appreciation of the intellectual part of his character, and a wish to be the means of retrieving the ruined fortunes of the Helvellyn family. He would thus keep Iris and her husband always near him, and they would make Rainham their home. This, as his title descended to the female line, would, by a reasonable arrangement, keep up the succession without a break. I was to have, under this scheme, a fortune of ten thousand pounds at once paid, the rest being entailed with the barony.

The journey to London, on the present occasion, was to hasten the arrangement, there having been as yet but a sort of tacit agreement between my father and Lord Helvellyn upon the subject. My father intended that he should resign his post when his marriage with Iris should be declared, in order that the new *ménage* should then fix itself permanently at Rainham Abbey.

During my father's short absence, my jealousy, from several circumstances, was continually on the increase. I was conscious that, as I grew older, I did not deteriorate in person—my glass told me I had no longer the sallow skin, the heavy eyes, the thin face, that made me always, when a child, postponed by superficial observers to the blooming Iris.

An event which took place about this

time enlightened me more as to the state of my own feelings than anything else could have done in the even tenor of our life at the Abbey. You must remember the fire there—that fire, in the escape from which you were one of the principal actors, and which had nearly reduced our noble mansion, and all within it, to a heap of ashes.

My father, you will recollect, was gone to London, to meet Lord Helvellyn. He had left us, that is, his daughters, with Madame de Vlotho, and Valérie, and yourself, the sole occupants of the house. I should add Dr. Buchanan, whom I forgot, because it was usual for everybody to forget him, inasmuch as, in his philosophy, he had the habit of forgetting everybody, everything, and even himself, as the sequel will prove.

The learned Doctor inhabited, in the east wing of the Abbey, an apartment which was remote from every one, except his servant. After the family had retired to rest, it was the Doctor's custom to sit up, pondering on the future, or calculating his past observations, in order to be ready with some plan of study or operation in the observatory, should the weather permit Iris to repair to her favourite study. He had passed the better half of a night in watchfulness, when, probably, he was overcome by sleep—for he could afterwards give no account of what had happened—a blaze of fire was seen to issue from the casement of his chamber, and the whole wing was speedily, to all appearance, one mass of flames. The alarm was soon spread; the terrified domestics ran scared in all directions; you,

ever active and intelligent, were on the spot, directing, and taking part in, every measure that was adopted, and were the principal cause that the Abbey itself was saved from destruction. Suddenly, however, you were missed from the scene; the servants, as they have since told me, saw you everywhere one minute, and nowhere the next. They were under the greatest alarm for your safety, for they felt their efforts were about to prove ineffectual for want of your presence and instinct of command, which had carried them so far through the awful conflagration, when you were seen, by the lurid glare issuing by a side-door from the body of the building into the garden, bearing a lifeless form in your arms.

Who was that favoured one whose life was dearer to you than your own, whom you

sought through fire and smoke, and whom, by God's blessing, you were able to transport into a place of safety? What being was that who, in such a crisis, called forth all the courage, all the energy of your nature, and prompted you to risk death, rather than leave her to her fate?

That one—that happy one—was Lamia! I felt—how shall I say I felt?—when, suddenly snatched from my couch, half suffocated with rolling clouds of smoke and sparks, I was first dragged, then lifted, then carried in arms I felt that I knew, and heard the words: "Courage, dear Lamia!" in a voice I could not mistake. I felt the pressure of your hand, the beat of your anxious heart. I fainted; I was as one dead; but happy. I saw I was cared for, and by Henry!

You brought me down (trust me to tell

you the story better, perhaps, than you could relate it yourself), you laid me on the grass at a sufficient distance from the conflagration, which was at that moment terrific, and when rousing myself I turned round to thank—no, only to *see*—my deliverer, you were gone. The awfulness of the catastrophe, the dream, as it were, that I was in, so bewildered me, that I nearly lost my senses. Madame de Vlotho and Valérie, who were both safe, were quickly at my side, with Iris, whose apartment was far removed from danger, but who had her own reasons for anxiety.

Again you were wanted in the crowd, which had increased by the arrival of some helps, and many impediments from the village, and the sounds: "Where is he?" "Is he safe?" "There he is! no—yes!" and such

contradictory exclamations, which I knew could not relate to any but Henry, were heard on all sides, and added not a little to my agitation. I never shall forget that night, that sense of danger, that scene of death—for such it seemed—combined with my own inward feelings of gratified self-love. I was the one you had selected to preserve.

But where were you meanwhile? You were seen coming a second time from the flames, but from the other extremity, half leading, half supporting, an ancient servant of the house, a gardener, whose habitation in the offices you knew was the nearest to danger, and whom your courage and humanity alone saved from destruction.

Then, however, I observed for the first time the effect which care for you had upon

my sister—when you were missed, when the cry for you among the people became general, her agitation exceeded her usually great powers of repression; and though on such an occasion the evident danger to any one, even a stranger, may excite and explain emotion, and though the bystanders thought Iris's anxiety to proceed from feelings of simple humanity, yet I, who knew her, saw that nothing but the deepest trouble of soul could occasion a similar demonstration in so imperturbable a being. Judge my feelings thereupon, and my jealousy.

Henry, what was your conduct after this? After having given me that proof of tenderness, after having, in fact, saved my life, and shown me that you did it not from mere pity, but from the heart, you suddenly changed your behaviour to me, and devoted

yourself anew, and with greater zeal, to please my sister. My feelings were not proof against this, my plan was quickly laid, and though it costs me much to make the confession of my crime, for it is no less, yet I will do it. Oh! pardon me, for I have suffered years of remorse for it since then.

CHAPTER VIII.

Hermia. God speed, fair Helena! Whither away?
Helena. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O, happy fair!
Your eyes are loadstars, and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching; oh, were favour so!
Your's would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Oh! teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

My father returned the day after the fire, unaccompanied by Lord Helvellyn. His

first act, after looking into the extent of the damage done, was to thank all concerned, and most especially yourself, for the efforts that had been made, and with success, for the protection of his house and property. He did not say an unkind word to the Doctor, the philosophical though unconscious cause of the whole disaster.

When things had returned a little to their former course, my father resumed his practice of riding with me, and I found that I gained every day in favour and ascendancy over him. I own I was not scrupulous enough to refrain from turning this new-grown power to advantage.

He, not unnaturally, asked me for an account of what I had seen or remembered of the fire. I told him correctly of all the particulars of the occurrence itself, and did

not undervalue the exertions you had made for the general safety; but, I added, what I had neither proof of, nor in the depths of my heart believed (though I was quite ready to believe it, had there been any plausible evidence of the fact), that you were endeavouring to win the heart of Iris for yourself. I thus plunged into the path of falsehood, and so violently animated was I against you and my sister conjointly (though against neither of you as separate individuals), that I ventured to give what I called proofs of it, in what I had observed of your behaviour to Iris. I might have added that which would have been true, namely, that I had seen her show signs of sensibility to your attentions but that was truth, and falsehood was now my game. I

tremble as I write these lines, but, Henry, remember this is a confession.

My father, greatly agitated at this news, which threatened the break-up of his favourite schemes, begged to know whether Iris encouraged you. I might have said that if she did not, she was at least not insensible, but, with an air of candour, I pledged myself that Iris was incapable of deceit, and that her affections were, to my knowledge, so entirely free, that her father's wishes in anything relating to her establishment in life were sure, when known, to be the guiding thought of her heart. I went so far as to say that she wished privately that a match with Lord Helvellyn might be the fate intended for her.

If this last was a falsehood, it was a very

indirect one, for, in fact, I knew nothing of my sister's mind upon the subject.

How can I expect, Henry, that you, frank and honourable as I know you to be, can ever forgive the baseness of which I here accuse myself, of which I confess myself to have been guilty, without reserve? I feared that my father, if he once perceived that Iris, calm and dispassionate as she was, had made up her mind to prefer you, whose talents and good qualities she had means of appreciating, to Lord Helvellyn, a stranger (of whom, if she heard anything, it might have been of a doubtful character), would certainly give way to his affection for his daughter, and even sacrifice his cherished plans to an accordance with her wishes. Fearing this, I tried all I could to separate you from my sister, in order

that there might be no danger of a rupture of the match between Lord Helvellyn and Iris. Then you might be mine, or not, just as I pleased; at any rate, you would not be my sister's husband—an idea abhorrent to my jealous soul.

My father listened to me attentively, and seeming re-assured by the statements I gave him that Iris was quite indifferent to you, told me he should not mention the subject to her, which, indeed, I begged him, for obvious reasons, not to do. After a long private conversation with you next day, which I have no doubt you well remember, I saw with pleasure that you were recommended to return to Oxford for your degree, with a promise of the living of Rainham parish as soon as it should fall vacant. You went: I triumphed;

but what a triumph, success without satisfaction.

Iris was visibly affected at your departure. Her very delicate complexion became still more beautiful, her fine form grew daily thinner, and her appearance careworn and anxious, while she redoubled her assiduity in the studies to which she more than ever devoted herself. My father thought her anxiety arose from the rather awkward position she was placed in, with respect to Lord Helvellyn, and was more tenderly careful of her than ever. I saw her pining away day by day, and every fading charm gave a bitter pang to my guilty conscience.

Lord Helvellyn came not; he was gone to Wales on business, and was then on a visit to a maternal uncle, a Mr. Powell, of Llan

Rhys, but Lord Rainham expected him daily, and hoped that his arrival would set Iris at her ease, and that the marriage might be finally arranged.

Dissatisfied with myself, I grew gradually more irritable, and, as I was told, more *spirituelle* and less amiable; Valérie praised my growing expression, my black eyes and hair, and my Italian look, like my mother. But I had not her piety, her angelic temper.

Two months nearly elapsed after the time I have been writing of, before my father heard one word from Lord Helvellyn on the subject nearest to his heart, or on any other. Indeed, as it turned out, the subject of my sister's marriage was far nearer to the heart of my father than of any other person.

Meanwhile her delicate health and fragile beauty, while it rather increased in that tender softness which is so natural, but often so deceitful, in youth, gave hints that her health, from some mental cause, was no longer so strong as it had been.

Perhaps there is nothing in the common course of life more melancholy than to see a young person of striking beauty, and once healthy constitution, gradually pine away under the insidious approaches of decline. And when those who have known the fine vigorous child—the playful and animated girl —the finally blooming young woman—see her at the moment of entering into the full career of life, losing by degrees the strength, the spirits, which have hitherto accompanied her through youth; most of all, it is melan-

choly to see the false but additional beauty of complexion, which, for a time at least, masks the decay of constitution. It is like the blushing roses of Pæstum, which bedeck the plain, as if to conceal the malaria which surrounds them.

In such a state was Iris. No one, however, seemed to perceive it, no one did perceive it but myself. Sad as the sight was, my duty now obliges me to confess that I observed it unmoved. Not that I wished her ill; but I was conscious that I had begun to injure her; I could not hide from my guilty conscience that had I told my father the truth, all this might not have been. We never love those whom we have injured; and here is one more evil of distance and reserve between sisters. Evil incitements, and wrong-

headed jealousies, may suggest themselves even to the good, and much more to girls of such strong passions and ill-tutored minds as my faulty education had left me with. Yet among loving, or even friendly sisters, how quickly would not the very thought of injuring one another have been discarded. I am writing a confession, or this should never have met the eye of man.

At this moment arrived one morning an invitation to Senhor Mendoza to accept the post of Maestro di Capella, at Madrid. His name was well known to the artistes of his profession in Spain; and having finished me as his most promising pupil, he willingly took the appointment, especially as he had been very nervous ever since the fire.

Before leaving us, however, the new

Maestro composed, and dedicated to me, a beautiful fugue, in which the tuneful melodies of the old school were successfully enriched with the harmonies of the later, while the false taste and clatter of the modern style were entirely avoided. It contained movements expressive of regret at leaving a hospitable house to which he bade a tender, but respectful farewell, and of bold aspirations to future success and celebrity in his divine art, and of enthusiastic devotion to its presiding saint. I accepted this tribute of real feeling with pleasure and pride; but persuaded him that a classical composer ought rather to seek inspiration from the Muses than the saints, to say nothing of my own decided preference of the former to the latter.

One morning, my father and I were walk-

ing up and down the terrace at Rainham, having just parted with Iris, who had left us in her little pony-carriage for some of her ordinary village business, when the post, which you remember at that time reached Rainham later than at present, was put into my father's hands.

"Here, at last," said he, "is a letter from Helvellyn. Skiddaw and Cross Fell are not more difficult to move from their bases than Helvellyn when he is on a holiday trip."

My father hastily tore open the letter, and, while I was quietly, but, if the truth must be told, most impatiently, awaiting from him the communication of its contents, I observed his countenance change; and, as he approached the end, it showed marks of a greater degree of perturbation than I had ever remarked in

him. At length, he appeared on the point of speaking, when, suddenly, with an effort, he compressed his lips, and, putting the letter roughly into his pocket, walked away with an expression I do not remember to have seen him exhibit on any other occasion. He walked the length of terrace in silence, and seemed as if going into the house by a garden door, when he returned quickly, and said to me:

"Lamia, I cannot speak to you now, but, in a short time, I will explain what has taken place."

So saying, he withdrew.

I was left to my conjectures, and, not choosing to be observed, as I might have been, in the park or gardens, I retreated into the conservatory, where, I believe, I picked off

the heads of all the orange-flowers, to the great dismay of the gardener, before I knew what I was doing.

I know not how long I remained in the conservatory, but, on leaving it some time afterwards, I met a servant, who had been sent to seek me, and to say that Lord Rainham wished to see me in his study, to which I accordingly hastened. As soon as I entered, I saw at once that his countenance had resumed its usual serenity, and that the struggle which the perusal of the mysterious letter had caused in his mind was entirely appeased.

"Lamia, I wish you to read this letter," were the only words he uttered, in placing it in my hands; and having done so, he left the room, and desired me, after reading the letter,

to drop it into a letter-box, which stood locked upon the table. As soon as I found myself quite alone I eagerly ran over the contents of the epistle, which were as follows:

"My dear Lord,

"You have doubtless been surprised at not hearing from me, but you will be doubly surprised at what are you going to hear from me; and, I confess, it is not without a feeling, which you will shortly be able to understand, that I address you at all.

"In a word, then, I must tell you that yesterday morning, in a fit of love or folly, whichever you choose to call it, if not, as most possible, of both, I married my cousin, Gwyneth Powell or Ap Howell, as they call it in these parts. I know she is unsuited to

me, but still more to the sort of situation she is to fill when she returns with me to appear as English Ambassadress at the Court of Dresden.

"I must trust, and not for the first time in my life, to your kindness to pardon this apparent breach of a tacit agreement (I cannot call it an engagement) between us on the subject of your daughter, both on the score that nothing definitive was settled in that affair on either side, though, as a project, it was certainly my duty not to think lightly of it; and, also, on that of the real haste and unpremeditated execution of my present match. Why was this haste? you will say. Can any one tell why he falls in love? is my answer. The fair and learned Iris was far too good for me; if Gwyneth is likely to prove little suited

to foreign and accomplished life, except after a considerable experience, Iris, with all her virtues, her distinguished excellence in so many ways, was as little likely to be happy with a not very regular personage like myself. Gwyneth, I have no doubt, will be a good scholar, but she wants much of *l'usage du monde*, and will benefit much by the contact with a superior state of intellectual society to what she has hitherto seen in these wilds.

"She has been spoilt, not by the world, but by being out of the world; and, as a last favour, I would beg of you, my dear Lord, to allow us to visit you at Rainham, the very best school of preparation for a person in my wife's new and peculiar position.

"Iris, I am sure, did not view the projected arrangement, or my humble person,

with any degree of special favour; and I know you and I both think so much alike on the subject of matrimony, that it is a consolation to think that even her father will not believe his daughter's happiness very much affected by this alteration in her prospects, which I have little doubt will be to her ultimate advantage."

The letter concluded with many affectionate expressions of regard.

You know what men of the world are, besides knowing the individuals in question. You will not be surprised that my father soon reconciled himself to the disappointment which this careless, but clever, *roué* had brought upon him; his only care was to break the news to Iris, whom he sent for on her return from her drive.

He was speedily consoled by hearing her disclaim with perfect composure all interest in the matter; her calm mind was only disturbed at the thought that her father had been wounded in his feelings, and on her account.

With her perfect consent, therefore, my father wrote to Lord Helvellyn a letter, as he called it, of absolution, and at the same time invited him and his bride to Rainham, to be present at the festivities in contemplation, on the occasion of Iris's coming of age.

Iris herself, though relieved from a certain anxiety by the rupture of her ill-assorted intended marriage, continued to look more and more delicate, alternately pale and flushed, while she grew thinner every day. Lord Rainham himself, who had attributed her previous delicate symptoms to anxiety at the

unsettled state of the arrangement with Lord Helvellyn, now began to be really uneasy about her health.

He wrote to you, to ask you to the birth-day *fête*, without imparting his plan to Iris, as he wished to judge for himself of the state of her feelings.

For some little time nothing remarkable happened in the family. It was thought a delicate hint to the learned Dr. Buchanan to give him a safety-lamp to burn in his apartment, in order to teach him carefulness, both for his own valuable papers and other people's at least equally valuable property.

The worthy Dr. Buchanan was far from being the last to observe the slow but evident change in the looks of my sister. He consulted his folios, of which he had always

one to quote on any possible subject; and after searching in vain for anything like medical advice in the works of Grotius, turned suddenly to a dusty volume of Paracelsus, in the firm expectation of finding some sure and sovereign remedy for ladies' ailments therein. My father, though beginning to think seriously of my sister's health, could not help smiling at the good old man, and his zeal for his favourite pupil. He did not discourage his researches among the ponderous tomes of our library, knowing the interest and satisfaction it gave to the Doctor, but gently hinted that Albertus Magnus and Zoroaster would be as good authorities in the case as any that he was likely to discover in the whole range of authors with which he was so intimately acquainted.

"The learned Swammerdammius," he began one day, "and all the Dutch Faculty of Medicine, recommend—" and he was going on with much more advice, equally to the purpose, when he was interrupted by my father, who told him he was quite sure that all the faculties in the world would recommend pleasure and recreation on the occasion of a birthday *fête*. He also recommended the Doctor, gaily, to consult his stars as to the fortunate hour for proclaiming Iris of age, at the banquet, or before, or after it, or at the ball; and the excellent old man, who had the kindness of true philosophy, actually took up his rather broad-brimmed hat and cane, and walked off straight to the observatory, where he remained till long after dinner-time, adjusting his instruments for the evening.

Immediately after dinner he repaired to his post, where he closeted himself till past midnight, so that nobody could ask him a question before the next morning. Iris, on account of her health, had not lately frequented the observatory, and showed no desire to learn the result of the learned Doctor's observations. To our surprise, however, at breakfast-time he was inexorably silent. He evinced the greatest reluctance to state what he had observed; and said that no conclusion could be drawn until he had referred to my sister's horoscope, which he had formerly made out, and calculated the necessary deductions therefrom, combined with the readings of last night's conjunctions of the planet.

At dinner, we teased him again for an explanation, but he looked grave, and de-

clined giving any opinion whatever. My father looked annoyed, certainly not from superstition: Iris showed not the slightest curiosity on the subject.

We were all now more than ever occupied with preparations for my sister's birthday; and as the *fête* to be given was to celebrate her coming of age, a large assemblage of tenantry and peasantry were to be assembled on the occasion. I was young enough to be amused by all this, though sufficiently indifferent to the event. I promised myself far more interest from seeing and watching the company, and getting an early insight into the world and its ways, than from any brilliant anticipation of the new pleasure awaiting me. I was not child enough to be astonished, and not woman enough to think of acting a part. I was, therefore, like a young girl,

merely curious to see, and perhaps to be seen. By the side of Iris, and on an occasion like the present, of which she was the Queen, I neither wanted admiration nor expected it; and in general it is individual affection, interest, rather than common admiration, that has been my object through life.

CHAPTER IX.

"E poi quando nel ciel parean le stelle,
Sotto gioso a suo magion tornava;
E 'n compagnia delle nove sorelle,
Celesti versi con disio cantava:
E d'antica virtù mille fiammelle,
Con gli alti carmi ne' petti destava:
Così chiamando amor lascivia umana,
Si godea con le Muse, e con Diana."

ANGELO POLITIANO.

"Teco l'avessi il ciel donna congiunto
In matrimonio: ah che pria non venisti
Al mondo, o io non son più tardo giunto?

"Ma questo van pensiero a che soggiorno?
Se tu pur dinanzi, ed io fui un tempo avanti,
Dal laccio conjugal legato intorno?"

POETRY OF LORENZO DE MEDICI.

LORD HELVELLYN and his bride at last made

their appearance. They arrived very late for dinner, after a long day's journey—the bride rather fatigued—for it was then four days journey from Merionethshire to Suffolk; and, as might be supposed, we were all very anxious to see and make acquaintance with her. My father received them at the door, and leading them into the old or Elizabethan drawing-room, which you know at Rainham, presented them to my sister. Her calm face and dignified manner never appeared to greater advantage than at that moment, her graceful self-possession, which did sometimes chill the company she happened to be among, was then quite in its place; and the circumstance of her having previously been intended for him who now led forward his young wife to meet her, known to all present, though declared to none, rather heightened the in-

terest of the introduction. Iris, however, perfectly free from embarrassment, took the hand of the young and girlish-looking Lady Helvellyn, and addressing some kind words to her, led her to a seat.

Lord Helvellyn, though many years older than his bride, was still a specimen of the finest style of manly beauty; dark, tall, Spanish looking, with rather a fearless look in his brilliant eagle eyes. He was so like that Spanish portrait of a courtier of Philip II., which you know in the gallery at Rainham, a picture that had always, to my childish, and even afterwards to my grown-up fancy, been the very *beau ideal* of a man and a lover, that I could not take my eyes off his countenance.

If my attention was absorbed by Lord Helvellyn, his was not less so by the beauty of

Iris. He seemed perfectly astonished to find that the cold abstraction of philosophy he had heard of, and which had frightened him into a rejection of her hand, was a really beautiful ladylike young woman, the effect of whose loveliness was not to be denied He, in fact, stood in rather an unpleasant position towards her, which was not lessened by his evident admiration for the prize he had so negligently lost. This was enough to impress his manner, on first approaching my sister, with a degree of respectful and courtier-like politeness which admirably suited his noble and romantic character of countenance and figure.

I, all this while an unnoticed spectator of the interview, had leisure to observe our guests, and speedily formed my opinion. My admiration of the husband was rather heightened than lessened by an unaccount-

able fear I began to feel of such a superior being, though that feeling mingled at the same time with an earnest hope of pleasing him.

Lady Helvellyn appeared by his side the most natural and unsophisticated little fairy possible; quick in her movements, gay and sprightly in her expression, her laughing eyes sought everywhere for somebody or something to join in her truly youthful spirits. She had evidently been a spoilt child, but made up in good-nature and vivacity for what she wanted in manner and *tournure*.

Gwyneth Powell (or Ap Howell, as her father liked to be called,) had been brought up entirely in Wales, and had had her own way in everything till the day when she married the Marquis of Helvellyn. Her father, with

true provincial pride, in which she participated, spared no pains to make her the most accomplished horsewoman of the county; she hunted, she shot, she joined in every sport, masculine or feminine, that was going on in the mountains of Powys. Her more ladylike accomplishments were confined to playing with some spirit on the Welsh harp, singing her national ballads, and some of the more useful points of housewifery, which even an heiress cannot afford to neglect who lives entirely *en province*. She had a pretty little gipsy-like style of beauty, which was as piquant as it was uncommon, and though as little to be compared with Iris in feature as in fortune, I was not altogether surprised at her having captivated her noble husband's affections. Being an only daughter, and

heiress to a property extensive and commanding influence in a country like Wales, though not very productive in point of income, she had been an object from her very childhood to the neighbouring squires, and this, perhaps, had added a little to the air *d'enfant gâtée* which was natural to her, and which she was at no pains to repress.

Gwyneth was fond of Helvellyn, and rather afraid of Iris; not that she was quick enough to remark, or suspect the impression my sister had made upon her husband, but rather because she felt intuitively her own deficiency in so much that Iris excelled in. To me, on the other hand, she showed an immediate and decided preference. As I liked her playful, natural manners, and wanted, besides, some one to accompany me

in my long rides, our friendship daily increased, and I attribute to that much of the knowledge of Lord Helvellyn's character, with which I should not otherwise have been acquainted.

She was enthusiastic in her praises of her native mountains, and of the wild life she led there, her fishing, her otter-hunting, her wild-goat shooting, and all the active diversions of a mountaineer's life. To my youthful and somewhat ardent temperament, all this was delightful, and she made me promise to come some day and join in her rustic sports in the principality.

"There," said she, "you may see scenery such as Suffolk does not produce; you will hear a strange language, see strange dresses and physiognomy." And as she spoke, she

looked up at me with her gipsy, smiling face, in her Welsh hat and cap, and red shawl, which she was fond of wearing, even in lowland Suffolk.

I could fancy the fresh breezes of Snowdon being extremely good, both for animal spirits and complexion. Her accent was like that foreign tone in which both Scotch and Irish begin their sentences when not used to frequent English conversation, a peculiarity which gave an artless charm to her mode of speaking, simple as it naturally was.

Lord Helvellyn, meanwhile, was entirely ignorant of the sensation he had awakened in me; he treated me civilly, and even with attention, as a child of his friend, but beyond this, there was nothing in his manner that I could call flattering. He seemed, at times, to

take pleasure in startling the ladies by some bold traits of character, some of what he would entitle characteristic stories of the ways of the world, which, to my young apprehension, were sufficiently new and astounding. But his conversation was always so gentleman-like and agreeable, so clever and full of point, that, although the severest criticism might now and then object to the subject, it was perfectly disarmed by the manner of narrating it.

My father, always fond of his society, usually engaged him in the discussion of political subjects, which his wit enlivened, while it induced us to listen to them. Thus, between the solid and the gay, the novelty of information on the one hand, and of sparkling repartee on the other, varied, too, by the

occasional vivacity of Gwyneth, my time passed more agreeably to myself than it ever had done, and I felt myself, by these steps, gradually mounting from childhood into woman's life.

Strange to say, I felt myself gradually assuming a sort of superiority over Gwyneth, and behaving to her, some years my senior, already married, a fortune, and every way, for the moment at least, holding higher ground in society than myself, as if she was a young girl whom it was my business to form and to bring forward. This, indeed, was not far from being the case, her previous seclusion, and, in some things, her very young notions of society, made her a scholar rather in need of advice from some friend or other. Iris could not be that friend, so I fairly took her under

my protection, and in a short time we became inseparable.

My mental position at that moment was certainly singular: unreservedly admiring Gwyneth's husband, I had not half the jealousy towards her for possessing him that I had towards Iris for exciting his admiration. I felt myself superior to Gwyneth in intellect; I knew that had I *champ libre* I could easily excel her in the race of attraction; but with Iris the case was different.

My father had kindly given me a little pavilion adjoining the conservatory, which he had fitted up as an aviary. It was closed by a network of gilt-wire, and contained a marble tazza, with a gurgling fountain, in which the elegant Whidahbirds and Virginia nightingales bathed and admired themselves

night and morning. Fresh plants were daily brought in from the conservatory, which the destructive little warblers daily destroyed, so that the mosaic floor was usually strewed with broken flowers of geranium or camellia.

Into this little sanctum Gwyneth and I usually retired, in confidence. Here we sat and exchanged secrets, but by no means equally, as I gave her but half mine for all of hers, which the guileless Gwyneth never discovered.

I must confess that I was led to encourage this intimacy, partly by the idea that my attention to Gwyneth would be pleasing to Lord Helvellyn, in the double view of being at once a compliment to his wife and a means of freeing him from her constant and childish fondness. This succeeded, but as he

thus gained more time to devote to Iris, I rather overreached myself by my manœuvre, as, though thankful to me for it, the profit was not on my side. I found in my private conversations with Gwyneth, that although not in the least jealous of Iris, she was not blind to the incipient defection of her husband; and one day the tears came into her eyes when he declined shooting with her, and even playfully said: "Your passion for the chase is growing somewhat beyond reason, my dear Gwyneth; since the Spanish Princess, whose amusement was shooting wild boars, I have heard of nothing like you as a Diana."

She pouted, and went her way with her favourite pointer, saying to me: "Three months ago he was ready to shoot every bird from Pen Gwyn to Aber Davatt, but it is

quite changed now." I did not reply, having, in fact, nothing that I wished to impart to her on the subject, but I was not, in my wicked heart, very sorry that she was sensible to a change in Helvellyn's behaviour.

The arrival of a new personage gave a considerable turn to the progress of events at Rainham, and I must now recal to you Prince Demetrius Menzikoff, a friend of Lord Helvellyn's, whom he had asked my father to invite to the *fêtes*.

The Muscovite was a very good specimen of his nation. Well-bred, travelled, and distinguished in his appearance, he had all the slyness and quiet observation characteristic of his nation. He possessed a constant fund of anecdote, collected in every court in Europe, diversified with that variety of detail, which,

when applied to business that nowise concerns them, frequently obtains for travellers of his nation the reputation of gathering information for their government rather than themselves. This Prince was, however, a clever man, and a friend of some years standing to Lord Helvellyn, who had a great regard for him.

Doubtless, you remember the day before poor Iris's ball. Nobody left the house or the gardens, Lord Helvellyn and the Prince lounged about the terrace and conservatory the whole day, Iris reposing in her room, Gwyneth running round the terraces, to exercise herself and her pointers. My father superintending the mighty preparations for the next day. Valérie and I were specially charged with the flower de-

corations, which were to consist of a vast profusion of garlands and festoons, to be hung over the many arched doors and windows of the Abbey. We had ransacked the pleasure grounds for evergreens, with which Valérie was gone laden into the housekeeper's workroom to make them up, while I had mounted the tubs of the tall orange-trees in the conservatory, to gather their fruit and flowers.

I was ensconced in a well-concealed, but not very commodious position, between a huge lemon-tree and a pomegranate, busily engaged in selecting their brilliant flowers and fragrant leaves for some purpose of decoration, when two persons rather abruptly entered the conservatory. I could not at the moment very gracefully or safely jump down

from the tubs, on two of which, of unequal heights, I was standing at once; my hands were also full, and I did not like to throw away my beautiful bouquet. It was, consequently, my involuntary fate to overhear a conversation which was not intended for me, which gave me no pleasure, but which I could not safely interrupt. The speakers proved to be Lord Helvellyn and the Russian Prince.

" Well, Prince," the former began, " what do you think of my folly now? You always used to tell me it was a great mistake in me to think of marrying, and, I doubt not, you have in your own mind thought me none the wiser for marrying a country girl, even though without merit and fortune. I have hitherto led such a careless life, and have been

so lucky, so easily pleased and self-satisfied in every stage of it, that really when it came to the pinch of matrimony, I did not give the matter as much consideration as I should have done to a Beer Bill in the House of Lords. And see how I am served, that is, how I have served myself."

"I think I understand you, Milord," replied the Prince. "I am sorry you should do justice to my sagacity at the expense of your own happiness; but you know I foretold how you would repent, though, of course, I knew not the circumstances."

"Here am I," resumed Helvellyn, "married, tied, nailed to that pretty little childish *paysanne*, who is only suited to her native wilds, and I am suddenly introduced to the most divine specimen of woman's beauty I

have seen for years, and whom her excellent father would have given me, with a superb fortune to boot, had I had common patience for myself, or decent gratitude to him, who has been my greatest friend and benefactor."

"*Why* you went to Wales for a wife," rejoined the Prince, drily, "I never could make out. For my part, if I marry when I return home, I shall not seek a mate in Siberia."

"It would have been better for Gwyneth had she remained to frighten the goats upon Carn-nan-billy with her pop-gun, which is as much out of place in a Suffolk *battue*, as it would be in a Bohemian bear hunt. But Iris is so cold, she is an abstract principle personified," said Helvellyn.

"Her statuesque beauty does not lose by that in the eyes of artistic judges," said the Prince, who was himself something of an *artiste*, "but she will not be popular with your young fashionables."

"Twenty thousand a year," said Helvellyn.

"*C'est assez*," replied the Prince.

"And there you are," continued Helvellyn, "still a bachelor, quite at home in this country, as you will be shortly in this friendly and hospitable family, and Iris does not make half the impression upon you that she does upon me, who have sold my liberty for certain acres of Pen-y-Rhybon belonging to my lady, whom they suit better than me," added he, laughing.

"I prefer the young girl," quietly observed the Prince, so quietly, that I suspected he had an idea of somebody being within hearing, though he could hardly have guessed the young girl was in the orange-tree a few feet from his elbow, in the corner of the conserva-

tory. "Is she, too, a fortune? The delicate Iris looks very likely to leave her sister with one."

My attention was now roused to the utmost, and hardly breathing in my precarious retreat, I waited and wondered, and wondered and waited, for what was to follow. Taking no notice of the latter disinterested remark of Prince Demetrius, Lord Helvellyn laughed at the idea of that passionate child, as he was pleased to call me, though he could know nothing of my temper but from report, being compared with that Grecian goddess, Iris.

"How can you, Prince, be taken in by that tawny-skinned little girl? She has black eyes, it is true, but we are used enough to black eyes abroad, not to be fascinated by them here, where they owe their success to their rarity. Besides, she has a temper, I'll answer for it, and temper always repels me, though it strangely stimulates others. My opinion of Miss Lamia is, that she will play a game some day of which I should have no ambition to be the victim."

Deeply did his words sink into my soul; I trembled with a new and unaccountable agitation as I hung by the branches of the trees, nearly discovering myself at the same time. Those words, that voice, that proud demeanour, that remark that showed he had observed me, but which betrayed that he thought lowly of me, all tended to electrify me, and, at the same moment, I made a secret resolve that, whether Lord Helvellyn's words proved true or not, he should not live without knowing something of the passionate girl, and the temper he was pleased to endow me with.

Fortunately for my security, the two gentlemen, tired of pacing the conservatory, went out to take their horses for a canter through Rainham Park. I hastened to free myself from my ambuscade, and ran off to my chamber, bolted the door, and sat down to reflect, if such a term can be applied to my passionate feelings.

I saw myself noticed, blamed, or at least disapproved, by the man by whom, of all

others, I most wished to be thought pleasing. I felt attracted, yet repulsed; for, with all his severe remarks, there was nothing unkind in manner, and as they retired I heard him say: "Any child of Rainham's must have something distinguished about her, and Lamia is like her mother, too, who would have been perfect, had it not been for her religion."

I heard no further, but these last words were a balm to my wounded soul, or rather to my self-love, of which, at that age, I had a larger proportion. I shall say no more on this subject, as subsequent events will sufficiently develop all the consequences which that day's little adventure led to.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
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THE

WIDOWED BRIDE:

OR,

LAMIA.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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GREAT-MARLBOROUGH-STREET.

1851.

LAMIA.

CHAPTER I.

"Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
Of love, and admiration, and delight.
Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes,
Kindling a momentary paradise!"

* * * * *

"The broad and yellow moon
Shone dimly on her form—
That form of faultless symmetry.

"'Twas not an earthly pageant,
Those who had looked upon the sight,

Passing all human glory,
Saw not the yellow moon,
Saw not the mortal scene;
Heard not the night-winds rush,
Heard not the earthly sound,
Saw but the fairy pageant,
Heard but the heavenly strains
That filled the lonely dwelling."

SHELLEY.

At last the birthday, for which there had been such great preparation, arrived. The usual arrangements on such occasions took up the whole morning. Nothing of note occurred till your carriage, Henry, drove up to the door. I was sitting with Iris and my father at the time, the other gentlemen having walked out to give their opinion as to certain triumphal arches, festoons of laurel,

&c., which were to decorate that portion of the park where tables were laid for the tenantry, while Gwyneth, who fancied she understood gunpowder, was gone to the keeper who superintended the *feu d'artifice*.

Your carriage drove up, Henry, and you were announced. Never shall I forget the blush, the smile, that animated the countenance of Iris at that moment. You too were, as I thought, under the influence of some emotion as you walked up to Iris, and cordially, though rather solemnly, gave her your congratulations on the day, and good wishes for the future.

My father, who himself showed unusual symptoms of nervousness on the occasion,

immediately hurried you off into his sitting-room, where you were a long time in consultation.

In that conversation, as I afterwards understood, permission was given to you to marry Iris, my father having no longer much doubt, since the marriage and appearance of Lord Helvellyn, of her preference for you. What else passed, or what you may have said, I know not.

The evening came, company came with it, the Abbey was decked, the Lady of the Feast was there. Very few persons had been invited to stay in the house, owing to the desire to keep Iris quiet before the day of fatigue. My father and I, therefore, were first ready to receive the guests.

The great baronial hall, long disused for reception, had been tastefully fitted up with light and gay wreaths of flowers, among which maiden's-blush roses were predominant. These were backed by evergreens, in which were suspended coloured lamps. Gilt Gothic screens of open tracery were placed in front, and the noble roof of dark oak, emblazoned with family escutcheons, rose above the whole in majestic solemnity.

The music was stationed in a lofty gallery, formerly, as it was said, appropriated to nuns alone. My father was very much pleased at the contrast, and said that if he had kept the priests there, his two girls would now have been nuns, or nearly so, mournfully se-

cluded in that gallery instead of mingling joyfully in the dance beneath it. I must say the scenic effect was beautiful.

The hour for the ball had now struck, and my father led Iris and me into the hall where the company were assembled. We were dressed alike in the richest white lace, a circumstance which seemed to cause much greater pleasure to all the country ladies around us than to ourselves. We had, indeed, both of us a taste, a true feeling of the beautiful in every branch of work or art, but as fine dresses, the richest manufactures were comparatively lost upon us. Iris had been that day presented by her father with a coronet of diamond stars in allusion to her

favourite study, which she wore in her hair that night. Her beauty set off by this magnificent but appropriate style of ornament, shone brighter than ever; and I look back to the festivity of that day, the taste and not exaggerated splendour which presided over it, the venerable appearance of that vaulted hall, the graceful form of Iris, and the noble bearing of my father, Helvellyn, Menzikoff, and the guests assembled, as one of the most striking scenes I remember in my life.

But the lovely complexion of my sister, heightened by the occasion, and flurried as she was by your arrival, betrayed signs of weakness too perceptible. She was ordered by the physicians on no account to dance;

she sat as the presiding divinity in whose honour the feast had been provided in a temple worthy of her. You, Henry, I remember, were most attentive to her, though you cast one glance of passionate regret on me, which I shall never cease to remember. It was reproof, reproach, and anxiety combined; I answered it by asking you to waltz, which you declined.

My thoughts were not left long unemployed, for Lord Helvellyn soon approached me, and, not less to my surprise than gratification, asked me to waltz with him. I immediately stood up and suffered myself to be led into the magic circle where I was now for the first time in public to

thread the mazes of the dance with a partner not indifferent to me. He waltzed beautifully with all the foreign ease and grace and perfect time, free from the affectation so often seen in English waltzing. No jerks, no jumps, nothing but the smoothest glide led us through the circling dance; always in time, always in place, the clockwork movement brought us true to our post with the music.

Helvellyn, after some civil, but indifferent words, left me for the side of Iris. He had, indeed, talked to me of her during the whole dance.

"There she sits," said he, "like the Queen of Night, resplendent in her icy charms. No

poet could dream of a superior being to Iris, could he cause one to descend

> "From the celestial orb to gratify
> His wildest longings."

I had no reason to be dissatisfied with the share of general attention I received. My jealousy of Iris was in no degree excited by her superior beauty, her fortune, or position as heiress; those vulgar notions had no place in my heart. I was content she should have the share of attention and regard she was confessedly entitled to, but I could not see with indifference the too exclusive assiduities of Helvellyn directed to her. Gwyneth appeared not to notice them at all, but danced

gaily the whole night, and was, perhaps, the happiest of the happy there. If I had wanted attentions, the courtly Prince Demetrius, and two friends he had introduced, the young Princes Romanzoff, from London, would have sufficed. They were incessantly complimenting me on something or other; my dancing, my dress, my lace, in which they were perfect connoisseurs, and even the red camellias in my dark hair did not escape without their share of admiration from these practised flatterers. No Englishman would have said, or, perhaps thought, half as much.

Prince Demetrius began, in earnest, to show that his opinion of me, which I had accidentally learnt while up in the orange-tree,

was really one of great admiration and devotion. He said he hoped to pass much time in England; that Russia was a fine country to belong to, not to inhabit; ending, of course, with the magnanimity of the Emperor, and the offer of procuring me a splendid cachemire, to be ordered expressly for me in Tartary. He had the good taste to say nothing of my sister this time, and I declined his Oriental present as much too fine for me yet. The ball passed off beautifully, without accidents or *contretems* whatever.

Gwyneth danced her hair out of curl, and childishly went and asked her husband to waltz with her, when seated by the side of Iris. He laughed at her simplicity, and told

her it was time for her to go to bed, and not sit up so late.

Supper was at length announced, and we proceeded to take our places with our last partners. Mine was the moustachioed Prince Athanasius Romanzoff, with whom I seated myself at the long table, which had been laid out in the picture-gallery. The supper was most beautifully arranged, flowers, fruit, evergreens, gold and silver plate, were in profusion, and the music playing "Mendoza's Farewell to Rainham," now brought out for the first time, resounded with great effect through the long suite of apartments.

I happened to sit exactly opposite the Spanish portrait, whose likeness to Helvellyn

was so striking as to be remarked by everybody. He himself sat next to Iris, and on my side of the board, so that I was fain to be content with the antedated copy in place of the living original.

After Iris's health had been unanimously given and responded to, you, Henry, recited those verses which I so well remember, from the pathos and deep feeling with which you pronounced them:

"Fair Queen of all this joyous festal sight,
Thy happy father's fond and dear delight,
We pledge thy name on this thy natal night,
With many an aspiration warm and bright,
Quaffing the rose-crowned goblet bath'd in light,
Bearing thy name, sweet Iris!

" With many a rainbow promise deck'd we twine
The votive tribute, and our hearts incline,
Filling the flowing cup with ruby wine;
Hymning the best and fairest of her line,
Wise in her goodness, in her charms divine,
The lovely, gifted Iris!

" And is this all those star-lit eyes inspire,
Have I no deeper tone, no feeling higher,
To blend with accents trembling on my lyre?
Yes, by that maiden grace, that vestal fire,
There is a hope to which I dare aspire;
A tender hope, a calm and true desire;
And while I breathe it, seems an angel choir
Might echo back the strain
That bears thy charmed name,
My Iris!"

There is no sentiment so deceitful as that

which prompts us to venture to look forward into futurity, not in behalf of our own selfish interests or desires, but in that of those to whom we wish well. When can such feelings, to all human understanding, be more indulged than on the eve of the entrance of a young and gifted creature into the full enjoyment of her station in this world, when the hardest heart could not prognosticate aught but happiness to the fair being, whose bright fortunes seemed already traced out for her?

We were doomed to witness a terrible example of the vanity of human wishes. Scarcely had our cousin ceased, with tears in his eyes from the emotion he sincerely felt in

pouring forth his wishes for the future long life and happiness of my sister, when poor Iris, the object of this naturally expressed tribute of affection, suddenly turned deadly pale, and fainted in the arms of my father. Weakened as her constitution was, she was unable to stand the great and unaccustomed fatigue of the evening; her affection for our fond father had made her over-exert herself, and the effort was too much for her.

There was a beauty in her even as she sank back in her chair, which was in the very moment of insensibility more striking than when in the full vigour of health. The dismay of the whole company may be better imagined than described. My father carried

her in his arms to her chamber. I followed with Valérie and Madame de Vlotho.

By the way, I heard the noise of the departing carriages, the sad but commonplace condolences of the guests, whose sincerity, however, was not to be doubted. On such occasions, the plainest and least expressive words often cover the most heartfelt commiseration.

We afterwards found that Lord Helvellyn had hastened to the stable, seized his horse, and galloped to the nearest town, whence he proceeded straight to London, and returned the next day to Rainham, with the first physician of the metropolis.

His arrival was at first a great relief to my

father, whose active temperament did not well bear suspense on any subject; but the opinion which Dr. —— pronounced, after having twice visited the sick chamber, though not decisive, was little calculated to raise his spirits. Poor Dr. Buchanan, who felt the illness of his favourite pupil quite as one of the family, sat bewildered at her door all day, incessantly asking for news of the poor patient.

You, Henry, were grave and sad, helping and assisting every one, but carefully avoiding me.

Iris revived deceitfully for a time, but remained confined to her own apartment.

I took my turn, with the rest of the family,

in watching by my sister, and offering the trifling helps that any one is equal to by the side of a suffering patient; but, on my confession, I am bound to say that my heart was not with her. I tended her kindly because she was ill, not because she was my sister; and I look back to that period of mixed and bad feeling with more remorse than to any period of my life.

CHAPTER II.

" Hath then the gloomy power,
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres,
Seized on her sinless soul?
Must then that peerless form
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins
Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline which is fair
As breathing marble, perish?"

" What softer voice is hushed o'er the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?

What forms leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honour'd the departed one;
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice."

SHELLEY.

One afternoon I went as usual to see her, and found my father sitting by her side, and holding her hand. His suddenly aged and careworn look made a deep impression on me: I then saw what affection suffers, when real care works upon a parent's heart. Henry, who had been sitting on the other side, put down a book out of which he had been reading to her, and left the room. Iris then

faintly asked to be left a short time alone with me. My father quitted her with a sigh, as if he knew what was about to follow.

When we were left alone, Iris, whose cheek was paler than before, except the hectic spot, which was therefore only the more apparent, slowly, but with a resolute effort, extended her now emaciated arms, and clasped me to her bosom.

Overcoming with difficulty a feeble sob, which threatened to stop her first words, she said, in a low voice: "Lamia, dear Lamia, hear me," and paused as if to avoid a cough. I, who had entered the room unconcernedly, and quite unprepared for any unusual scene, beyond the necessary symptoms of her

malady, was struck to the heart by the solemnity of this appeal. I, who seldom trembled, shook with the apprehension natural to a conscience already sore with its own reflections.

When I had a little recovered myself (for at that moment I was the less mistress of myself of the two), I sat quietly down by my sister's bedside, and listened with the most earnest attention that I could command to her faltering and impressive words.

" Lamia, we are about to part; and I could neither quit this world in peace myself, nor, I am sure, leave you at ease in it without one word that *must* be spoken. Stay—think not to soothe me by vain hopes of recovery—my

mind is made up ; I have no regrets, no cares, nothing more to think of in this life, save my father and yourself, dear sister.

" It has been clear to me, but not, I hope, to others, that you have till now (but not *now*, I trust, dear Lamia,) been too much estranged from me to fill that void, which an only sister alone can fill, and which our dearest mother, as I well remember, though you cannot, Lamia, foresaw that our disparity of age must tend to create, should there not spring up between us that affection which she desired, but, alas! did not live to cultivate. I was too much your senior for childish fellowship, not too much so for the companionship of our late years, had the bond of

intimacy subsisted between us. I have ever reproached myself as your elder sister for not having bent myself and my inclinations towards you, for not having to my own satisfaction supplied the mother's place we both, but chiefly you, wanted. If it is my fault, certainly not from want of thought (for days and nights have I passed in thinking of you), may Heaven forgive me! I am ready to accuse myself for neglect of you, but I fondly thought you inwardly knew my affection for you.

"I saw—I could not but see—your growing love for Henry. Yes, Lamia, I will not now reproach you, Henry was your object, and he will now soon be yours. Be happy, love him

as I love him, love him for my sake. I know your temper, I feel how difficult it will be for you to go through life without a guide. May God in heaven bless you both! As I love and freely forgive you, I say no more, nor have I said this even to my father. For your own sake, dear Lamia, put away from your heart the gnawing, cankering worm of jealousy, which poisons every relation of life, and makes the most gifted mind a prey to suspicion and remorse."

Exhausted by the effort, Iris once more held out her arms to me, and then sank heavily on the pillow. Every word she had spoken had been a dagger to my conscience, and the present confused state of my own

feelings rendered it utterly impossible for me to reply to the effusions of her generous and forgiving heart. After a pause, broken only by my sobs, she resumed :

" Dear Lamia, dear sister, let these last words serve to make you remember me when I am gone ; be still and ever kind to our dearest father, and you, in the many paths of error to which you will be exposed, think of your poor Iris, and let her voice recall you from them ; think that you are obeying our mother, who is in heaven, whose holy religion alone will sustain you as it has done me."

She laid her hand gently on my mother's crucifix, which lay always beside her, and would make me kiss it. Nor did I refuse the test,

from my heart, full at that moment, I accepted it, but the prophetic words of Iris sank deep into my heart. Full of the most poignant remorse, and struck dumb with a sudden sense of my inferiority to the angelic creature now ready to meet the Creator, I could only seize her hand which held the holy symbol and bedew it with my tears. Never shall I forget that emaciated hand, that placid countenance, that sharply chiselled brow, which resembled more nearly a Grecian recumbent statue than aught in life; the beautiful eyes alone retained their fire, and pierced with no unkindly meaning, but with the truthful expression of a sincere affection, my inmost soul.

In the last stages of bodily disorder, but when the mind retains its wonted strength, the eye and mouth alone serve to convey the mental impressions of one human being to another. In that sad hour, the will has lost its power over the muscles: no command of expression in the features remains; and the anxious eye, when the voice is near extinction, continues to be the sole medium between the intellect of the dying and the living. Then, in those dread moments, is the human face indeed divine; resuming the innocent character of infancy, as if about to launch into the childhood of another existence. Such was then Iris; such is she now, as she nightly appears to my troubled spirit, to

watch over me, to warn me, to protect me.

After touching the crucifix, I remember no more: a sudden fiery pang darted through my brain, with agony such as I never had felt before, though, alas! it has many times assailed me in after years. I felt not as one fainting, not convulsed, but as if my reason was sensibly and materially torn from my splitting head by some demoniac power, far past any mortal effort to control, and I sank senseless.

What next happened I know not, only from the report of Valérie, who, with Eloise, my sister's devoted maid, removed me to my room. I had heard the last words of

Iris; my reason had temporarily, but entirely, left me. How long I continued in that woeful state, I know not; but I fancy some days—an age—had past before I woke to consciousness. What a waking! Those only who have been conscious of that aberration of reason, to which all may be subject, can conceive it.

On first recovering from my state of mental vacancy, my strongest feeling was that of extreme bewilderment: I knew not where I was, or what had happened. This soon gave way to an unaccountable nervous sensation of joy and happiness at something I could not explain to myself, and which, as often as I taxed my weakened nerves for a solution,

threw me back into a stunning insensibility. I now believe that it was nothing but the obscure consciousness of having passed from a condition of excruciating bodily suffering and mental misery, to that negative state in which absence of pain is positive pleasure. The first thing on which my shattered intellect was capable of fixing an observation, was the extreme—I have no right to say unusual—kindness and anxious attention shown to me by all around me: my every motion was watched; I was scarcely suffered to touch anything to serve myself; my father was, or seemed, constantly near me, with his earnest but haggard look; Valérie and Madame de Vlotho were ever at my side. It seemed a

constant object with them to prevent my wishes, and to soothe and keep me quiet as a child; my father looked constantly and kindly on me, but never spoke. I thought I saw other faces, but they never spoke. I thought I saw the distant and the dead, but they never spoke. Valérie was the only one whose voice I heard or recognised. I was not able to reflect; I saw, I felt, but I forgot instantly the passing scene. I saw you all, in imagination, huddled together: Heaven knows who were or were not there—perhaps none were real except Valérie. I was weak—I was low indeed.

How often, in the pride of mind and of science, have I suddenly been cast down in

after-times, by the simple and involuntary recollection of that awful period of my life. Whenever those peculiar pangs shoot through my head, I shudder, lest a renewal of those days should be in store for me.

Had I been myself, I should have remarked the absence of Eloise from the women who so affectionately tended me, but I only thought of it, fortunately, when I was strong enough to hear the cause.

I will not prolong the narrative of those dark days: suffice it to say that more than a week elapsed before I was able to ask a question. In nothing had my kind attendants' care been more conspicuous than in their evident determination never to ask me a

question while in the state I have described. They did everything for me: they listened patiently to my incoherent whispers; they kissed my burning forehead till I slept, addressed me with kind words when I awoke, but never fatigued my broken mind with a question. To a wounded intellect, what unspeakable effort it is to frame the simplest answer! On looking back, I may say that my dear and affectionate nurses treated me as softly and as tenderly as if I were almost in a state of incipient insanity. Oh! what then must be the reality of that awful visitation of mankind!

At last, one day, I saw the well-known face of Eloise in my room, bathed in tears.

Madame de Vlotho was evidently holding her back, and trying to prevent her from speaking to me. Endued with unusual strength, I rose up, and, supported by Valérie, slowly went towards her, and then fixing my eyes upon her weeping countenance, I endeavoured to speak. I could not articulate one word. My effort had, however, given me confidence in showing that I possessed more bodily strength than I or my attendants anticipated, so they did not further interfere with me. Eloise understood me, and, with admirable presence of mind, hastily threw a warm mantle round me, looked inquiringly at me through her tears, and pointed to the door. My heart sank as I motioned her to conduct

me towards it. She had, I am sure, come prepared, and therefore lost no time in seizing my present moment of resolution, lest it might fail; and saying in my ear: "Come!" her tears broke out afresh—but she still went on. I throbbed all over, but I went with her.

I knew, I felt—though none had told me—that at my last interview with Iris, I had seen her for the last time in life. I had heard her last connected words, for though she lingered, as I afterwards heard, a few days longer, she scarcely spoke. She was only heard to utter the names, from time to time, of "Father! Henry! Lamia!" but Lamia had been the very last.

Thus instinctively prepared, by a violent and continued effort, I reached the door of my poor sister's apartment, when I was nearly overcome by one of those accidental *contretems* which do sometimes happen, and which, though usually trifles, cut to the very soul. Hanging against the door was the very Iris-wreath that Henry had presented, with those fatal lines, on the birth-night of her whose earthly beauty was indeed dissipated like the rainbow, to which he had compared her.

Sick at heart, I pressed forward, lest I should never get there, supported by Eloise, and followed, unknown to me, by my attached Swiss maid, Marie, who was aware what

awaited me within. At first, my eyes, dim, but not then with tears, saw nothing but my father, seated, his hair whitened, his look fixed.

" He has never moved from her all night," said Eloise, in a low voice.

My eyes seemed to open suddenly, and stretch, so as to take in at once a whole scene of things that, at my first entrance, had certainly not been imaged in my sight. Instantly I became aware that I was—I can hardly say standing, but present, in a room but too freshly remembered, by the side of my sorrowing father—at the foot of my sister's coffin.

What a blow is the first certainty—the sad

reality of death! No sooner had that certainty flashed across my mind, than I sank in anguish at my father's knees, and embraced them, sobbing, and hiding my face in my hands. His grief was silent and overwhelming, and, indeed, beyond the stage of passionate excitement.

He was roused, and kindly lifting me up, he pressed an affectionate kiss on my forehead, and tried in vain to say something. At that moment I caught the first view of my poor sister's cold, inanimate face. Lying shrouded in her coffin, she looked so calm, so peaceful, that her expressive, but marble features seemed to say, and say to me, unmistakably:

"My spirit hath found the wings of a dove; now have I flown away, and am at rest!"

Her lovely eyes were closed in death, her fair hair parted and wrapt in linen, but decked by the fond hand of Eloise with the melancholy but simple ornaments of the dead. A garland of pure white flowers lay on her brow, the crown of virgin immortality. Pure white flowers lay scattered in her coffin, and this pious foreign custom, not quite disused in England, was never more solemnly appropriate.

I summoned courage enough to kiss, a last time, the pale brow, and then thought I saw the death-smile on her lips. The burning

pang shot through my brain like an avenging sword, and the thought that I could never more, in this world, repair my injustice to my sister, or show my penitence, struck me to the earth.

I was conveyed insensible to my own room by Eloise and Marie, and there did I long lie on the bed of sickness, a victim as before to racking pains of mind and body. I will not give you a repetition of my symptoms; enough to know that, after some weeks, youth and constitution brought me round.

The same care was bestowed upon me: my father found his mind best occupied in attending to me; and as I grew better, I

devoted myself, according to my sister's wishes, to him exclusively. It was long before I was allowed to touch music for fear of bringing back my nervous pains, but at last I tried and found benefit from it. It pleased my father, and it soothed me; for though it be true that the musical temperament is irritable in an extreme degree, yet the practice of music relieves, by giving a scope to, the irritation.

You were there, attentive to my father, kind but distant to me; you were everything that is good, but you were no longer to me what you had been. O, Iris! had you known the state of my heart! Yet it would have embittered your last moments to have

been aware that the Henry you were leaving to me, was nothing to me.

My heart, I blush to say, was already irrecoverably lost, and you, Henry, if not quite ignorant of that, were at least not a little indisposed towards him who had won it.

The example of my sister's holy end had wrought a strong impression on my understanding, and I saw clearly that her religious feelings had sustained her, as they had my mother, in the hour of death. I was, therefore, more nearly good at that period than at any other of my life. But it was only imitation, feeling and sensibility that acted on me: my future life will but too plainly show

the weakness of my then sincere resolutions.

On my recovery, I heard that Lord and Lady Helvellyn and Prince Demetrius had left Rainham a day or two after my sister's first illness; Lord Helvellyn, in utter despair at leaving that almost perfect being, whose perpetual dignity of manner as well as solid understanding and accomplishments reminded him too forcibly of the mistake he had made in throwing himself away on an inferior though amiable person. And poor Gwyneth also, who came so artless, so innocently happy to my father's house, how did she leave it? With floods of tears, the reason of which was, perhaps, not very clearly explained

even to herself. She kissed my poor father like a child. I believe she came to take leave of me, but beyond seeing her image dimly and confusedly flitting before me with the crowd of other and less welcome faces that haunted my imagination during my wretched illness, I have not any recollection of her presence at that period. She was warmly attached to me; our minds were certainly cast in a different mould, but not for that less suited to each other; our warm and unschooled hearts were both equally open to strong and generous impressions; we enjoyed liberty whether for galloping over the plain or for the free intercourse of ideas; in which, however, I was the mistress, she the pupil.

Poor Gwyneth, perhaps she already foresaw that her husband's heart might not always be her own; his adoration of Iris had been too apparent for her to be quite blind to it; but she had not penetration to guess who was destined hereafter to deprive her of it.

You were advised to go back to college to take your degree of M.A., preparatory to orders, for the purpose of becoming curate of the living of which you are now rector. No intimacy, no liking, had sprung up between Lord Helvellyn and yourself. He could not be jealous of your unavowed attachment to me, though perhaps he might have been of that borne by Iris to you. Both of you were self-willed, proud, and resolute in your determi-

nations, therefore it is no wonder that, with totally different characters, you could not associate.

Lord Helvellyn's departure had been hastened by his sudden recall to his embassy, at the Court of D——, where state affairs imperiously demanded his attention. He did not leave England without writing in terms of the most affectionate sympathy, and strongly inviting my father, whose melancholy bereavement excited his deepest pity, to visit him at D——, an invitation which I learnt with the greatest satisfaction, and which contributed not a little to my recovery. My father's failing health, indeed, required some such change of scene to relieve his

affliction, which time rather increased than diminished. The only solace he seemed to find was in the occupation resulting from the erection of a monument to the memory of his beloved Iris.

The funeral had been conducted with the greatest privacy, both on account of my illness, and of the total inability of my father to attend to any such misplaced and melancholy pomp as some persons would have suggested to him in his sorrow. I had, in consequence, been left in ignorance of the time when it took place, and of every circumstance connected with it, nor did I know the place of my sister's tomb. It was, I found afterwards, erected by the side of that of our mother, and consisted of an equally beautiful

and chaste composition, representing the airy flight of a liberated soul, under the form of an angel, winging her way to heaven upon a rainbow. A pathetic but simple inscription of a few lines served to commemorate with truth the virtues of the departed. My heart was with the work, but my feelings were too acute to be transmitted with works of taste connected with a sister whose loss I felt so keenly.

Madame de Vlotho went home to her friends in her native country, a deep and lasting sorrow for the death of her beloved pupil causing her a delicacy of health from which I heard she never subsequently recovered.

CHAPTER III.

"Hæc præter, motus animorum; et corde repostos exprimere affectus, paucisque coloribus ipsam. Pingere posse animam, atque oculis præbere videndam. Hoc opus, hic labor est Pauci, quos æquus amavit Jupiter aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus. Dis similes, potuere manu miracula tanta."

DU FRESNOY'S ART OF PAINTING.

"Here thy well-study'd marbles fix our eye,
A fading fresco here demands a sigh,
Each heav'nly piece unwearied we compare,
Match Raphael's grace, with thy lov'd Guido's air,

Caracci's strength, Coreggio's softer line;
Paulo's free stroke, and Titian's warmth divine."

POPE.

THERE are few minds strong enough to be insensible to the influence of a total change of scene and of external circumstances. I do not allude to changes of fortune, but to those of country, society, or friends, which occur to every one more than once in their lives, but which often pass unnoticed, even by those in whom such vicissitudes work the greatest alterations. If any class of minds be calculated to resist the slow and silent mutations of character and opinion, which are likely to take place when surrounded by persons and things entirely new, and open to

ideas captivating from their very boldness and dissimilarity to all that previous experience has warranted, it is certainly not the class of minds appertaining to rather forward girls of seventeen, to which happy but visionary portion of the species I then belonged.

My illness, from which I but slowly recovered, acting upon a naturally nervous and excitable temperament, but little restrained by mental discipline, had left me in a state of feverish susceptibility to all new impressions. My father's health began also gradually to decline; and after a seizure which had some tendency to paralysis, he was advised to try the effect of travelling, with the occasional

use of some foreign waters. This, and the very slow progress of my recovery, sent us abroad, a step as ill-advised for me as it was well-advised for him.

Our plans were soon made. Rainham, though I dearly loved the place, had latterly been the scene of such melancholy events, that I was not myself sorry to leave it for a temporary absence; and my poor sister's death had so forcibly recalled to my father the loss of our mother, that, with his age, the depressing effect of a lengthened residence there was better avoided.

The notion of a continental tour was agreeable to me, from the simple reason that it would be new; I wanted to see

what France and Spain were like, how the people lived there, and especially whether the foreigners, of whom I had seen so many at Rainham, were right in praising every climate in Europe above our own.

Valérie, who was delighted at the thoughts of revisiting France, talked to me without ceasing of the delights of that country, and with eager attention, I listened to her gay and animated descriptions of all she remembered, and of all she was sure I was to see and admire them. The readiness with which I made my preparations for departure had even a good effect on my father, who began to remember his early travels, and

whose spirits improved in proportion as he found me an intelligent and inquiring listener. My first and only duty at this period was to attend to his health and comforts, and, by degrees, I became, if not capable of supplying the place of Iris, at least able to be a more equal companion to my father than I had ever felt myself before. Nothing contributes more to such intelligent companionship than a reasonable and well-concerted plan of travelling; and where the persons are an attached father and daughter, the former endowed with talent and experience, the latter with a mind not less inquisitive than susceptible, the benefits of travelling may be in the highest degree realized.

We started under the most favourable auspices.

I must not forget to say that we left Rainham under your care, and in Rainham, the now old but still indefatigable Dr. Buchanan. You were charged to take as much care of one as of the other; the poor Doctor was the last remnant to us of that philosophy to which Iris had devoted days, nights, and perhaps health, and we respected him as an ancient monument, and loved him as one dear to our departed. He was now deeply engaged in, perhaps, his last literary labour, namely, the revision and completion of my sister's projected Essay on the Celestial Distances, which he was

to edit—a labour of love, in which he took extreme pains to secure the whole credit to his lost, but still beloved pupil. You were never to leave him alone at night with fire and candle. This, and your looking after the parish of Rainham, as curate to the old gouty incumbent whom you were to succeed, were to be your daily cares.

I will not describe our leaving home—the late events there, and our natural feelings are all known to you. Having known nothing of London, I went, ignorant of the society of my own capital, at once into that of foreign countries, though not immediately, as our wandering mode of travelling took us at first rather out of the world than into it.

I need only sketch the outline of the first part of our travels, as it was not for a long time that we made a halt of more than two or three days in any town. We went rapidly through France, avoiding Paris, and directed our course to the southern provinces, whence after a short sojourn in the delightful valleys of the Pyrenees, we passed over the mountains into Spain. Travelling was so new to me, that even the plains of France were not without interest in many different ways; but when we first approached the majestic chain of the Pyrenees, and beheld their Alpine summits thickly sprinkled with the winter's snow, together with the rich hues of a southern landscape at their base, my ecstacy knew no bounds. I then for the first time

felt the elevation of soul so peculiarly the attribute of those who have a natural feeling for the great and sublime, however confined the sphere in which they may have lived. Hitherto I had seen, I had known nothing great except the sea and the heavens, which from their familiarity affected my mind only on reflection; I now beheld Nature in her wildest garb, and in one in which she was previously unknown to me. I now, as if by sudden inspiration, felt what was art in its highest walk—the worthy imitation or reproduction of nature. I felt the bright ray of poetry illumine my fancy; the invitations of science in these grand scenes called my reason to fathom the mysteries of nature

presented to my view. The charm of climate the picturesque landscape, the associations of history, lent a glow and an expression to painting which I had never discovered on canvas, even under the hand of Claude. But I felt that henceforth my poetry would not be merely in books, my science in cabinets, or my ideas of nature confined to galleries: I should find all these in real existence on the face and in the constitution of the world we live in. That world, in short, was new to me, and I was seventeen; I was prepared to enjoy it, and even to return with greater zest to the tame and secondhand descriptions of it which I had left, simply because I had become acquainted with the reality.

The first town we stopped in beyond the frontier was Burgos; my father had a particular wish to trace the monuments of Moorish domination in Spain, and took great pains to instil into me the proper principles of discrimination in art. He was well read in the history of Spain and could see a Goth in a pinnacle, or an Arab in a fret-work; he delighted in seeing me attentive to his instructions, and encouraged me in sketching every object of interest along the road. By this means, he gradually formed my taste; and being naturally quick and observant, I made great progress in the art of sketching from nature everything indifferently, whether a ruined turret or a peasant's cap. Costume,

indeed, was one of my favourite subjects for the pencil.

In this way we slowly visited the romantic towns and villages of Spain; going from Burgos to Saragossa, Valladolid, Valencia, and Barcelona, but avoiding Madrid, as we had done Paris. My father did not yet feel equal to society, and enjoyed, as I did, the very independent manner of travelling we had adopted. There were no banditti in that part of Spain, and the people were friendly and civil. They would make me speak Spanish, and I acquired considerable proficiency in the language. Valérie alone was rather discontented that we did not pay France the compliment of a longer visit, and

longed to stop a month in some large town, were it only "*pour voir du monde.*"

As all was new to me, I did not care where we went. As the provinces we visited are some of the most musical in Spain, I collected a stock of their most original airs, which I sang to the guitar every evening, and did not fail to recognise some of my old master Mendoza's favourite melodies among them.

At last it became necessary to quit Spain, before the weather became too hot, and we accordingly re-entered France by a different route from that we had before taken. I distinctly remember the sensation of half disappointment I felt at returning to the good

inns, greater civilization, but tamer life of France, after the adventurous and almost wild travelling we had been used to in Spain. It is so pleasant, the riding through a country nearly in a state of nature, with rough mules, strange and picturesque guides, and some singular or romantic object in every day's journey, that I felt quite sleepy in rolling along the straight, monotonous French roads, where so little occurs to break the outline, or interest the imagination. Valérie, however, was delighted; and, as soon as she reached Perpignan, began singing to me every song she knew—French, Spanish, or Italian—and could hardly be persuaded to stop.

Thenceforward, my travels had quite

another character, but I must say, once for all, that this first tour in Spain, with "Don Quixote" ever in one hand, and "Gil Blas" in the other, is still engraven on my memory, with all the circumstantial freshness of the most recent occurrence.

You are not to suppose that I never thought of Helvellyn, or of all that had passed before we left England. I had ample leisure to think over and reflect on those, to me, important subjects.

My heart was in the same state. My mind had gained in accuracy of observation as well as in decision. Still, by nature irritable, I had yet much to acquire in the way of self-command, if not of self-control. I knew we

were to end by going to see the Helvellyns at D——, and I was satisfied. How very little suffices to content the most irritable heart, provided that little be the desired object!

We arrived at Florence. My father, being perfectly acquainted with that city, settled himself at once in an agreeable villa among vines and olives, from whence one had the most delicious view.

During the hot weather, I rode into town early every morning, and went first to see, and afterwards to study in, the galleries. We did not, as yet, attempt any society. Florence was said to be very empty at that time of year, and we took it for granted, and lived quite to ourselves.

My father, whenever he was not prevented by indisposition, accompanied me to the works of art; at other times, Valérie—now happy—was my companion. My artistic education continued to advance. Music and painting were my favourite studies, and, in each branch, the old masters were the lights which I preferred to guide me. My father constantly read, or told me the history of everything I saw, and then in his own manner made an eloquent discourse on the merits of each work of art, and the qualities of the artists who had produced them. In this way he taught me to philosophize, and reason upon every remarkable object within the scope of our reading or observation. My natural

bent was much inclined to this species of mental exercise, and I gained by it that spirit of examination and analysis which you have often remarked in me, but perhaps not always approved.

My recent visit to Spain, a country like, and yet unlike, Italy in so many respects, gave me full employment for comparison between the two countries. I compared their arts, their languages, their history, their climate: I weighed every particular accurately, but could not satisfy myself in giving the preference to either. Not a church in Florence was unvisited by me, and I even made acquaintance with a few of the most educated and enlightened of the clergy.

At Florence we went not at all into society; my father's health required my constant attention; and as to myself, I cared little for amusements of which as yet I had no knowledge, and which, in truth, I have never much enjoyed since. My leisure was devoted to the arts, to the study of languages and of the history of Italy. I tried, under the direction of a respectable Abbate, to appreciate critically their poetry, and to discover what had made it so popular as to be known even to our early English poets. By this line of reading I became, in a short time, very poetically inclined myself; and I attribute to the studies of this period the nice attention which, you know, I have always

paid to the graces of style and propriety of expression in every language and in every sort of composition. Poetry is an excellent preceptress to the taste in general; she gives a desire for harmony, a feeling for the graceful in all branches of art, and renders the judgment, as it ought to be, fastidious in all that is intended to elevate the soul, or to interest the fancy. Even in music, I always feel that it is the inspiration of poetry that animates the charmed numbers: it is divine poetry that gives the expression to inarticulate harmony, without which it would be less than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

I said that I frequented the galleries, and even copied in them. By degrees I found

that my presence there attracted a certain degree of notice, and that I never sat down to paint before the "Giuditta" or the "Medusa," but some observations were whispered about me, as to my being like that severe heroine, or unlike the other classical monster. I began to perceive that, although Valérie was always with me, I was an object of attraction to strangers.

This gave me no concern: my genius being always totally absorbed for the time in whatever occupation I was engaged in, I never took notice who was near me. My early and constitutional spirit of emulation and jealousy, though far from extinct, was dormant, or had subsided into a fixed and steady pursuit after

excellence in whatever I undertook. That this part of my nature did not always remain quiescent, will appear from the sequel.

I was not a little flattered by being thought like the Jewish virago; and although I had no wish to swing a giant's head in my hand, or to act the part of the beautiful daughter of Herodias (also one of my likenesses), I was not sorry to find myself placed in that rank of beauty.

CHAPTER IV.

"Ten thousand columns in that quivering light,
Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
With their own radiance than the heaven of day;
And on the jasper walls around, there lay
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,
Which did the spirit's history display;
A tale of passionate change divinely taught,
Which in their winged dance, unconscious genii
wrought."

SHELLEY.

"Ach Gott! die Kunst ist lang!
Und kurz ist unser Leben.

Mir wird, bei meinem kritischen Bestreben,
Doch oft um Kopf und Busen bang!
Wie schwer sind nicht die Mittel zu erwerben,
Durch die Man zu den Quellen steigt!
Und eh' Man nur den halben weg erreicht,
Muss wohl ein armer Teufel sterben."

FAUST.

AFTER some months passed quietly and agreeably at Florence, we moved on to Rome; my father thinking that the climate might suit him, and I full of anxious curiosity to see a place and a people so famous.

We were obliged to travel slowly, the weather being still warm, so that I had time to enjoy the journey through the beautiful country of Tuscany and Umbria. My late practice in painting had quickened my eye for

the principles of the picturesque; and without reading the learned books that have been written to teach us how to see, and hear, and feel, I saw, and heard, and felt everything my own way, without being at all sensible of the want of a master. My spirit had gradually grown more and more independent with my years: without vanity, I could not help a certain consciousness of superiority which, quite content within itself so long as not offended, rose into something more than simple emulation, when talents worthy of my rivalry happened to come into competition with me.

I found one charm in the Italian landscape which I have not seen noticed by any one,

that is, the singular harmony of nature and art in its composition. There may be broken mountains, rapid torrents, and a rich vegetation combined in many countries, but in Italy every building, villa, or farm-house, seems made to suit the landscape. The cow-sheds are supported by stone columns; the labourer lives in a tower; the farms and country-houses are like castles or old forts; none of the commonplace of northern existence seems to be there to vulgarize the beauteous face of nature.

I was seated by the roadside, waiting for our carriage winding its lengthy way up one of those steep mountains on the Roman frontier, and employed in sketching a group

of peasants with their mules, which would have been a subject for a Berghem, when a lighter vehicle, containing only one gentleman and his servant, came up with us, and suddenly stopping opposite to me, the gentleman alighted. To my great astonishment, it was Prince Demetrius. After some phrases of mutual recognition, compliments on my drawing, &c., he said he would wait for my father's coming up in the carriage, and accompany us to Rome.

On arriving at Rome, my first care was to establish my father in a comfortable, rather than a magnificent palazzo, on account of the visibly declining health which he exhibited. Not only the loss of Iris,

whose image seemed constantly to accompany him, but the recollections of his early days in Rome, of my mother's youth and beauty, and the happy union which had made their lives for so many years a scene of perpetual happiness, weighed heavily on his spirits, and his chief pleasure seemed to be in talking to me of those times. Every ruin, every palace or villa that we visited, offered to him some remembrance, which he imparted to me, and which I the more readily encouraged, as it at once soothed him and interested me.

He now seemed to find me growing more and more like my mother; my speaking Italian naturally, having been more or less

used to it from infancy, and my frequenting the churches, the names of which I had heard her pronounce, my complexion considerably browned by the southern sun, all tended to favour the resemblance. In fact, father and daughter grew reciprocally dearer to each other; and I really believe that had Iris lived to that period, my jealousy would have ceased to exist.

My first impressions on entering Rome were totally unlike those I have heard described by others. Some are disappointed; more, perhaps, are transported with a sort of made-up fit of enthusiasm, excited less by the objects before their eyes than by the ideas which previous reading or imagination

has created in them. I, on the contrary, seemed at once to comprehend the whole actual situation and past history of Rome at a single glance. I saw in the first street we entered the character of the population—careless, indolent, impassioned; the poverty-stricken but picturesque families of peasants, from the grandfather to the bambino, praying before a lamp, the gloomy friar walking through the crowd to his convent church; I saw the buildings, mostly churches of the Cinquecento style, rich, and not in the best taste, but conformable to their religion, both in spirit and decoration; I saw the great monuments of the middle ages, the speaking, if not living witnesses to the early

trials of Christianity; and last, and greatest, I saw the triumphs of ancient Roman art and power in those imperishable remains which have for centuries been the attraction of all the civilized world. I saw through all the contradictions, the inconsistencies, of Roman life; and I came to the conclusion that the people were probably much the same they had ever been, full of fitful energy and fire, sensible to beauty, susceptible of passion; that their religion was still, as in older times, mostly a religion of the eye, sometimes of the heart, never of the reason; that their genius was still turned to the ornamental and the graceful, in every walk it might chance to pursue; and that the

chief, perhaps the only, want of the modern Roman, is a direction, which his present mode of government neither does, nor ever will supply. Yet, at times, even in modern history, the Popedom has given an energetic direction to its vassals, both in arts and arms; but that was when it went with the spirit of the age, and when the spirit of all Christendom went with the Patriarch of the Vatican.

Neither my father nor I were bigots at any time: we mutually agreed in these sentiments; and the little society of *savans* and enlightened clergy and artists whom we occasionally assembled at our house only confirmed our ideas.

I continued my studies in music and painting: by the advice of an Abbate, who was our *cicerone* to most of the galleries, we visited the minor ones first, intending to end with the *chefs-d'œuvre* in each department of art. In one of the less frequented collections, I was particularly pleased with a very fine picture by Coreggio, representing the family group of Adam and Eve, with Cain and Abel as children: the mingled expression of delight and anxiety, in the midst of toil and grief, in the parents, and the natural grace and beauty of the children (in whom, however, a strong difference of expression already betokens their future characters), cannot be surpassed; the frankness and open countenance of Abel

is the perfection of childish innocence and simplicity, while the scowl on the brow of Cain—a bold, Herculean boy, however, already showing almost a manly beauty, has something in it of fearful truth and impressiveness. The landscape, a roughly-tilled field, surrounded with Italian pines and cypresses, which show, where darkest, the ill-concealed figure of the serpent, watching his prey: but the golden pencil of Coreggio has not failed, with admirable taste, to admit a ray of heavenly light passing between the figures of the parents, whose forms it only partially illumines, to fall in blessed splendour on the head of the innocent Abel; while Cain, though not in the back-ground, partakes of

the shadow which shrouds the figure of the Tempter. I never saw a more graceful composition, more glowing, and at the same time, transparent colour, or a subject treated more poetically—I had almost said religiously.

Prince Demetrius, who had much taste for the fine arts, was often to be seen sketching in the same galleries that I frequented, or taking notes of the antiquities or other curiosities that I visited. As he was a constant, and, I will add, an agreeable member of our little evening societies—and at Rome every gallery is open to all the world—I thought little of this; but Valérie, who always accompanied me, and whose eyes, if less piercing, were certainly more excursive than mine, soon found out that it was not

the result of accident. Valérie, having no colours to mix, or pictures to copy, had ample time to *promener ses yeux*, which she did to some purpose.

Prince Demetrius always spoke to me when we met, but had the tact to confine his conversation to the observations that might naturally arise, and the compliments which, in the mouth of a foreigner, as naturally come to the lips when he merely wishes to be civil as when he really wishes to make an impression. He complimented me upon the progress of my work, and made some judicious remarks on the various paintings; and then usually attended us part, but never the whole way, home.

Valérie, one day, after he had left us, said

she had heard that the Prince paid no court to any of the ladies of society; that he never said to them half so much as he said to me.

"How is it, then," said I, "that all the ladies here know him to be so agreeable? for they all praise him to me, which is wonderful if he pleases none of them."

"It is to please you, Mademoiselle, that they say so," answered she, drily.

"What do you mean, Valérie? You know I am not a person to be played with: I will have no nonsense talked to me."

Valérie was hurt at this, and said, with an earnestness which almost amounted to warmth: "*Mademoiselle, ces dames voient comme je vois moi-même:*" and stopped, to check her

rising emotion. When much moved, she always spoke French, and with great volubility; I was prepared, therefore, by her beginning, for something out of the common.

"Speak on, dear Valérie," I said, kindly, to her.

"Well," she said, resuming her composure, "I will talk no nonsense, but everybody sees that the Prince, from the time he came to Rainham Abbey, has had his eyes for ever fixed upon you; and now it is more apparent than ever. The few ladies you know here, who are in total ignorance of Rainham Abbey, and all about that, see only an attraction—very natural, I am sure, Mademoiselle—that seems to have arisen here, and like good

ladies, are always willing to forward an attachment that does not interfere with themselves. If it did—ah . . . . *altra cosa.*"

My eyes were considerably opened by this communication; and esteeming the Prince only as an agreeable acquaintance, I determined to stop, or to avoid, his assiduities, in which, after a time, I succeeded.

In furtherance of this purpose, as well as to procure a little variety for my father, who wanted change of air, I proposed an excursion to Naples, to which he readily assented. We left Rome by the sea-coast, and were to return by some less-known route through the mountains.

To Naples, therefore, we went; and pleased

as I was with the novelty and magnificent scenery I found there, I confess that after Rome, and after Spain, it struck me rather with disappointment. Travellers ought to contrive to see Naples, Venice, and other Italian cities first, and to end with Rome, as the culminating point of all that is noble in arts, history, and religion.

At Naples, however, I felt the full influence of Italian climate, and saw how much it added to every enjoyment, and how it heightened the effect of every beauty, whether of art or nature. We visited all the delightful recesses of its enchanting shores, wandered through its numberless villas, and examined its rich collections of ancient art. It was

there, in the galleries furnished with the spoils of Pompeii, that I first learnt to appreciate the severe design and chaste beauties of sculpture, and to acknowledge the superiority of that art, which, without the aid of colour, owing its effect of chiaroscuro only to its material forms, gains a position nearer to reality than any mere representation upon canvas can ever pretend to accomplish.

We returned by a mountain-road from Naples to Rome, only stopping by the way at a place where some fine ancient sculpture had lately been discovered. Among these were two pieces which pleased me exceedingly, as examples of the grave and the gay manner of the ancients in teaching mythological subjects.

One was an almost entire group, of large size, representing Prometheus chained to the rock, on which he is doomed to expiate the audacity of his crime against Jupiter. The giant, a miracle of muscle and sinew, lies fettered to his stony bed, on which the heavenly fire has fallen from his hand, while the implacable vulture gnaws the liver of his undying victim, by whom stands the cold, passionless prophetess, the wandering Io, predicting with oracular dignity the course of events to come. The manner in which physical pain was expressed in the contraction and distortion of the body, while mental suffering alone seemed pourtrayed in the features, struck me as one of the boldest and most

successful efforts of art; I know only the Laocoon to which it can be compared.

The other relic of antiquity was a basso-relievo of Cupid and a Muse, who has playfully undertaken to sharpen the mischievous god's arrows for him. While she is at work, she turns on him a look of the most beautiful, and at the same time most significant, archness, as if thinking, vain maid, that she had cleverly secured the power of Love in the service of the Muses. He, on his part resting his indolent arms upon his bow, looks up at her with equal archness, and greater sauciness, knowing that he has entrapped the Muse into the service of Love.

These two specimens of antique art have

always seemed to me perfect, as showing the exquisite taste of the ancients, in their treatment of classical subjects.

Once more at Rome, I was not sorry to learn that Prince Demetrius, who had had the good taste not to follow me to Naples, had been ordered back, with divers others of his countrymen, to Russia, by ukase of the Emperor, who, by a sudden caprice, chose that his subjects should not travel during the next year; an order which that amiable Government did not fail rigorously to enforce.

Our second stay at Rome was but short; I only renewed my acquaintance with its classical and Pagan antiquities, much to my

father's pleasure, as they were now almost the only things that gave him any interest. I had there, and wherever opportunity offered in Italy, studied with deep attention the old Italian Church music; and I looked forward to Germany as likely to afford me further insight into the arcana of that divine mystery which comprehends within itself at once the graces of art, the resources of science, and the purest pleasure of execution. I already formed secret plans of composition; but they were as yet so secret that I will not here say anything about them.

We left Rome for Lombardy and Vienna, stopping only at Bologna, to see my favourite saint—Cecilia, whose sad and affecting history,

impressed upon my mind by the simple and pathetic monument which after-ages have placed over her tomb, has always appeared to me one of the most touching of our legends.

The noble churches of Milan and Venice attracted my father's attention, and, by degrees, I learnt to consider cathedrals so much more as fine historical museums than as temples of worship, that, except by fits, I lost all the little feeling of religious awe that my philosophical education had left in me. Over the gate of one monastery in a small Lombard village, I chanced to see a pretty group in Maiolica, representing St. Agnes with the lamb; a rude and mutilated stone

fragment of the same subject had been one of my early studies of drawing at Rainham, our Abbey having been dedicated to the same saint. It had been a favourite object with Iris, and the sight of it unexpectedly in a foreign land brought such a mass of painful recollections to my mind, that I was again attacked by one of those maddening pangs, which, since my sister's death, have constantly accompanied every wakening feeling of remorse.

I need not describe Venice: my father bought there a magnificent composition of Paul Veronese, as a companion to one in our gallery at Rainham. It was "The Parting of Desdemona and Othello;" she stands at one

of those Gothic balconies, for which Venice is celebrated, and bids adieu to Othello, already embarked in a superb gondola, at the moment of departure for his galley. The rich accessories and gorgeous colouring of the scene by such a painter, and in such a city, may be imagined. It was to match "The Departure of the Crusaders," by Titian, at Rainham.

We then hastily proceeded by Vienna and Prague, to Dresden, where we arrived at the beginning of the winter.

CHAPTER V.

"Cherish and love thy wife in good manner,
As heartily well as her thou can devise;
For nothing is so precious and so dear,
As is an humble wife in godly wise;
Thou shalt all pleasure have that should suffice.
A good woman is very manne's bliss,
Where so she loveth true and steadfast is."

OLD POET.

"La vraie philosophie respecte les formes autant que l'orgueil les dédaigne. Il faut une discipline pour la conduite, comme il faut un ordre pour les idées."—PORTALIS.

I NEED not tell you with what kindness

and hospitality we were received by the Helvellyns. They lived in a great house near the banks of the Elbe, and had besides a large country house, called the Sachsendörfer Hof, to which they occasionally made parties in sledges, for boar and bear shooting.

Their house in town was large enough to allow a whole floor to be given up to my father and me without inconvenience; which, as his health often led to his spending the day quietly in his room, was exactly what suited him best. Gwyneth was overjoyed to receive us, indeed, she seemed to me so altered in looks (though for that there might be some special cause), that it struck

me our coming was an agreeable relief to some care or anxiety previously existing in her mind.

My father, whenever he did not feel inclined to join the company down stairs, saw one or two persons at a time in his own apartment; sometimes I, sometimes Valérie, read to him the cleverest French works of the day, at others, he would converse with Lord Helvellyn or one or two foreigners, whom he had formerly met in England.

The Embassy, besides several young *attachés*, comprehended two principal secretaries—Mr. Vassyll and Mr. Darcy; the former, a cold, supercilious, and worldly man, observing, polished, and satirical. He

was obliging to us, and very agreeable in a small society, rather haughty and distant in a large one. His colleague, George Darcy, was a merry, good-humoured, headlong young man, fitted to make the agreeable rather before a number than in *tête-à-tête*. He spoke German well, went everywhere with a little *Spitz*, after the Dresden fashion, and lost his heart, without thinking twice about it, to this or that fair lady of the day, and was *le bienvenu dans toutes les côteries*.

But I must not begin to give you the characters of our society before I relate the circumstances under which I found my former joyous and light-hearted companion Gwyneth.

Alas! she was sadly changed. Though evidently and sincerely overjoyed to see us again, the emotions she felt were far from manifesting themselves in the way they would have done a year ago. She was clearly oppressed by some hidden mental anxiety; and for a day or two after our arrival, she plainly sought an opportunity to speak to me in private; but when that came, she wanted courage to proceed. At length, one day she invited me into her morning room, a tasteful and luxurious boudoir, and opened to me, as to her early and best friend, the sorrows that preyed upon her heart. She began with an appearance of calm, but after the first words, she threw herself into my arms, sobbing

violently. I had great difficulty in getting her to subdue her emotion, but at last she told me that she was the most wretched of women; that she was then, as was most natural, more devotedly attached to her husband than ever, but that Lord Helvellyn no longer cared for her, and was easily attracted by the charms, or rather by the wiles, of one of the most unprincipled women of the Court of Dresden.

"Whatever his object might be, I know what Countess von Hildenheim aims at—it is not only his love, but his influence; and believe me, dearest Lamia," said she, with tears in her eyes, "the object of that woman is not a flirtation, but a political intrigue:

her reputation is such, that she is now careless of it, and would willingly sacrifice that, whether in appearance or reality, for the sole purpose of succeeding in some manœuvres against this Government, in which my husband's name may suit her views, or rather those of others, whose not unconscious or unwilling tool she has made herself. And my husband, who used to be so clever, so sharp-sighted—so fond of me—gives into all this as if he had no wife;" here she broke into a flood of tears, which both relieved her, and rendered any reply from me unnecessary.

I let poor Gwyneth speak on, as soon as she would, and heard all her sorrows

without attempting any but the most ordinary topics of consolation. Indeed, I was ill-fitted for such a task, and, moreover, I was secretly not sorry to hear that Helvellyn was still capable of paying attention to the attractions of the few who were worthy of his notice. I did not wish ill to Gwyneth, but I felt that I now had a chance of being appreciated by a man of distinguished talent myself. I had seen Helvellyn so easily taken with Gwyneth herself, so quickly diverted from her by the superior qualities of Iris, that I had no doubt in my own mind that, were my vanity to lead me that way, I could make him an easy conquest. But I anticipate.

Gwyneth continued her tale, and innocently said: "Now, dearest Lamia, I am above all things delighted to have you here, as I am sure your talents will assist in keeping Helvellyn at home. I feel sure, since I have let you into the secret of my grief, that you will try to help me to amuse him here, where he has already your father's society, which he is so fond of, and only wants the variety and charm you can so well bring into our domestic circle, to be kept permanently within it."

I kissed the poor weeping eyes with the most traitorous kiss that deceitful woman ever gave: yes, I am making a confession, and I am bound to make known my faults

to you, severely as I know you will judge them.

At my persuasion, Gwyneth consented to resume her former accustomed gaieties, to go into the world, and have occasional parties at home.

We went, therefore, frequently to the Opera, and other places, where the finest German music was performed, which I began to study deeply. Church music, of which, in a moral sense, I was utterly unworthy, principally engrossed my leisure hours, and the lessons I had learnt of the Roman style, my frequent attendance at St. Peter's, and the best choirs of Italy, now served, with the additional knowledge I acquired of the first

German masters, to form my taste, both in choral and instrumental music.

A grand sledge party was announced for the following week, when it was hoped the snow would be deep enough for the purpose. We made great preparations in dresses and paraphernalia for the occasion; and, as my father could not go, it was settled that I should be driven by Lord Helvellyn. The guileless Gwyneth gave him up willingly to me, as her best friend; she said she was no longer in spirits enough to entertain him with her lively sallies and Welsh stories, as formerly, so she would be driven by an old Count Hotzenplotz, who would talk to her all the way.

While this scheme was in agitation, we did not the less amuse ourselves with the ordinary diversions of the place. Our host's box at the Opera was a never-failing resource, and the first evening that I happened to go there, the Crown Prince, and, after him, most of the gentlemen of the Court, came to pay their compliments to Lady Helvellyn, and, incidentally, to be introduced to me. Appearing without my father, I was at first taken to be sister, either of Gwyneth or her husband, a circumstance that, for a long time, was assumed to explain the familiarity with which our whole party lived together.

Gwyneth whispered to me that the Crown Prince's visit was entirely owing to my pre-

sence, a compliment which, as I was not ambitious of it, I coolly disclaimed. Immediately after, I observed Lord Helvellyn in a lady's box on the opposite side of the house. I suspected whose it was, but was surprised to see him take up his glass, and then, after a very short excuse to the lady, quit it rather hastily, and in two or three minutes make his appearance by our side. Gwyneth's pleasure was evident; she did not tell me that this visit was due to me, but had she done so, I could have believed her.

On our return home, I was surprised to hear from Gwyneth that I had created a sensation in the house. New to the world, though not inclined to disbelieve the compli-

ments I received, I, at least, never thought of my own appearance. Gwyneth now, for the first time, assured me that I was a beauty.

"I acknowledge that I was well dressed; I owe that truth, in justice, to my maid," said I, to Gwyneth; "but, pray, repeat me no more men's flattery, if you please."

"Nay, my dear," said she, "a woman's compliment is, at least, the more credible of the two."

She was in such good spirits at her husband's having left the Countess Hildenheim's box to return to hers, that I thought it a pity to differ with her on any subject, and so wished her good night.

Mr. Vassyll paid me always the most

deferential, but, at the same time, ceremonious attention. Quiet, and scrupulously observant of the rules of courtier-like politeness, he was alternately very agreeable, or very formal in his conversation, always artificial, even at his best.

Our great sledge party was fixed for the last day of the Carnival; meanwhile, I followed my usual occupations and amusements. I went daily to the gallery, where I continued my practice of drawing, as I had done in Italy. The great treasures of the collection were not thrown away upon me; my father went once with me after the weather became milder, and his taste approved of all the bits I had selected for sketching from the less

known masters: the more celebrated required no guide to point them out.

The beauty, I had almost said the virtue, of the collection, is the famous Madonna di San Sisto. Seeing it so soon after its rival in the Vatican, I compared the two in my own mind with singular satisfaction, and came to the conclusion that, with equal beauty, the Madonna di Foligno is perhaps the finer painting as a work of art, but that the picture at Dresden is unmatched for religious majesty and expression.

Lord Helvellyn met me there at first accidentally, but afterwards on purpose to watch my progress in the art; his fine taste, and agreeable as well as judicious remarks,

made these meetings a great pleasure to me, though I did not, of course, seem to encourage them.

Valérie was always with me; indeed the good girl had by degrees become such a kind and amiable companion to me that I left her out of nothing that I could well take her to. My taste, my talents, were my own, but many of the observations I have made in travelling, on the world, on manners and customs and prejudices, are derived from her quick and shrewd remarks on the people and countries we have seen together. Such remarks being frequently drawn from very trifling circumstances, I should never have made, or lightly passed over; but she noted everything, and I

made reflections, or drew conclusions for myself. We walked, we read, we worked together, and her lively imagination was so much in unison with mine that she drew forth my ideas in the most natural manner simply by expatiating on her own

I sometimes saw Lord Helvellyn in society with Countess Hildenheim, and was able to judge that, by his manner to her, the attraction, whatever it might once have been, was not now one to break poor Gwyneth's heart, unless she really chose it, as some wives do; I was more surprised by the Countess's very sudden fit of friendship for me.

I had promised Gwyneth, with many kisses, to do my utmost to keep Lord

Helvellyn at home, which, indeed, was my own object, as his society was becoming daily more fascinating to me. She, unsuspecting, was continually pouring out her thanks to me for my assistance in recalling him to his family circle. The Countess, a woman of tact, who wanted the Ambassador for her political intrigues much more than for anything else, cleverly gave in to this altered state of things, and was clear-sighted enough to perceive that her best game now, was to load me with flattery for my talents, &c.—a game which I easily saw through.

My feelings, nevertheless, were not perfectly at ease. I could not but reproach

myself with duplicity towards my confiding friend; and though I tried to persuade myself I was only taking a little justifiable revenge for his neglect of me at Rainham, my conscience would not absolve me from the charge.

Winter was now fairly set in, and with it the gaieties of the Carnival—a northern Carnival—commenced. We had frequent sledge parties on the Elbe, and through the forests. The pure cold air, the brilliancy of the sunshine, the sparkling frost, all contributed to put us in spirits. There is something in the rapid darting of a sledge, and in a sort of feeling that you are not moving on the usual elements of earth or water, but in

the air, that is indescribably exhilarating. It is more bird-like than anything short of actual flying. Perhaps the riding a runaway courser (with the power of stopping at will) is what comes nearest to it.

Lord Helvellyn usually drove me, Lady Helvellyn, when not at home ailing, accompanied us in a rather heavier but easier sledge generally driven by the good-natured Mr. Darcy. Sometimes when the weather was not too severe we drove, by torchlight, through the streets of the capital, whose picturesque buildings appeared to the greatest advantage, encrusted with snow, and illumined by a winter's moon. These frequent opportunities of conversing alone with Hel-

vellyn were, alas! but too dangerous for me, as although he was too experienced not to be cautious, yet I was too inexperienced to be aware how deeply I was compromising my own happiness.

The time appointed for our grand sledge party into the Saxon Switzerland now approached. Time and distance are as nothing with light and Pomeranian ponies. The Countess was in despair at seeing all this joyous *train de vie* going merrily forward: she watched, she fawned on me, and ended by detesting me.

After the part she had played, she could not well try to work upon Gwyneth; but she somehow tried to engage Mr. Vassyll to give

hints to her always tending to injure me in her mind. Mr. Vassyll was sly enough to be able to say a little, but too wise to venture to say much; and that little was so decidedly resented by the honest heart of Gwyneth, that he never returned to the subject. Indeed, he knew his situation too well for that; and it was only by artfully impressing on him that it was for the ultimate purpose of enlightening Lord Helvellyn, that the intriguing Madame de Hildenheim for a moment imposed on the sober wariness of the First Secretary of Embassy.

Our great party, for the three last days of the Carnival, was at length arranged. The Crown Prince, who was a professed ad-

mirer of somebody at the English Embassy —though of whom was a question still wrapped in an interesting veil of mystery— had heard of our project, and had requested Lord Helvellyn to allow him to be of the party. This being, of course, acceded to, his Royal Highness volunteered, by extending the party to one day longer, to invite us all to the Royal Schloss Pillnitz, and to give us the spectacle of a tournament on the snow. We were to proceed to Lord Helvellyn's shooting-house at Sachsendörf, and return next day to town, where the Carnival was to close with a grand *bal costumé*, at the Royal Palace.

In the meantime, two events occurred

which have some bearing on my story. Mr. Vassyll having been entrusted by the Countess with as much of the secret, or the suspicion of it, as related to me, had been blindly led into the toils of that unscrupulous, but clever *intriguante*, by her quick perception of the state of his own feelings. He was, in fact, gradually attaching himself to me; and would have been but too glad to do something to detach Helvellyn from me, even in his own interest. Not yet perceiving my cautiously concealed attachment to his chief, he thought that the Ambassador once removed, the Secretary had the best chance, especially as his attachment would be fair and open; but he miscalculated the generous

heart of Gwyneth, and failed in consequence.

The other event was the arrival of Prince Demetrius. I knew that he had proposed to join us in the end of winter, but I thought that his recall to Russia would have entirely prevented it.

Although our meeting, after the plain refusal he had met with from me at Rome, might have had something awkward in it, the Prince was too well-bred a man, and had too much regard for our circle generally, not to desire to avoid causing any embarrassment to me. I saw at once that he meant that all that had passed should be considered as at an end, and that he wished to put us at our ease as soon as possible.

My father and Lord Helvellyn expressed the utmost astonishment at seeing him, and inquired how he had managed to overcome the Imperial jealousy of his foreign tastes and occupations.

"Oh," said he, "I contrived that very easily. The ukase for all Russians to return home was issued in a mere fit of Imperial caprice, without any real political motive or reason of state whatever. Had any such reason existed, it would, of course, have been a harder matter; but even then not impossible. I am known to dislike Petersburg, and therefore have to buy my ordinary passport rather dear, say a thousand roubles, to satisfy all objections. Well, after a muster

of all vagabond Muscovites, such as was proclaimed last year, it costs each of us just double what we paid before. Those who choose, pay and go; those who do not, save their money and stay: both secretly abuse the Government. Ask me no more questions," added he, laughingly, "it would be dangerous for me to answer them. I am but too happy to feel myself in Europe, and at liberty again; and am His Majesty's most loyal subject, as long as I can travel."

We were equally delighted to have him, and, with all the characteristic versatility of his nation, he immediately set to work to assist us in our plans for amusement. My father, who entered little into any conversa-

tion, was interested in listening to that of Prince Demetrius, quietly adding to his stories about Russia, "What a country! What a Government!"

The Prince brought me some new music, and presented Lady Helvellyn with some beautiful costumes, which were most welcome. Not less so was some fresh caviar, sterlets, and other Oriental delicacies, to Lord Helvellyn's eminently diplomatic *cuisine.*

The day for our long expected *course en traineaux* arrived, and my heart beat high with expectation. The novelty of the scene and climate, the brilliant sunshine and silver frost which distinguish a northern winter, and strangely, to a southern eye, combine

joyous gaiety with intense cold, all tended to elevate my spirits in the highest degree. Clothed in the richest furs, and in sledges, whose neatness and trim, joined to the lightness and rapidity of the horses, formed a turn-out equal in its way to anything in the shape of equipage in Paris or London; even Gwyneth appeared more cheerful than usual, as she mounted the sledge with the courtier-like Count Hotzenplotz, Grand Veneur to the Court of Saxony. I was accompanied, to my very great inward satisfaction, by Lord Helvellyn, whose sledge and whole *attelage* were pronounced by the Russian, certainly the best judge, to be perfect. A long train of others followed us, partly our own, partly

the Court invitations. The signal given, we started at a great pace, but with the utmost regularity, and swiftly cutting the crisp and echoing snow, we left the picturesque towers of Dresden far behind us.

CHAPTER VI.

"'Thou fearest not then the serpent on thy heart?'
'Fear it!' she cried, with brief and passionate cry,
And spake no more—that silence made me start.
I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud, between the sea and sky.
Beneath the rising moon, seen far away,
Mountains of ice, like sapphires piled on high,
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
On the still waters—these we did approach alway."

SHELLEY.

In a few hours, going at a railroad speed, we reached Sachsendörf, where a part of our

train remained as guests to Lord Helvellyn, for the *chasse* of the next day; while part continued their course to the Prince Royal's château at Pillnitz, whither we were all engaged to reassemble on the day afterwards. My father was unwilling or unable to join in these fatiguing gaieties, and remained quietly at Dresden, leaving me under the matronly chaperonage of Lady Helvellyn.

I need not describe the beautiful drive by the frozen Elbe, the warm and welcome dinner after our twenty degrees of cold, or the agreeable company; I was so absorbed by Helvellyn during the drive, and so surprised at Mr. Vassyll's assiduities during the evening, that I had little leisure for external observation, even had I been less fatigued.

The next morning, before the gentlemen, with their jägers and dogs, sallied forth to the bear finding, the Crown Prince came over from Pillnitz to pay his compliments to the ladies, instead of joining the *chasse* at the Tinneritzer Wald, which was the rendezvous. Gwyneth would have it this *galanterie* was intended for me, I, on the contrary, was inclined to think it a consequence of her apparent want of a tie to home, since the acquaintance of her husband with the lady I have before mentioned became generally noticed. The Prince was most polite, and, saying that his *fête* of the next day would depend upon our presence, set off with Menzikoff, who was the learned director of the bear hunt, to the forest of Tinneritz.

I will not describe the bear hunt, though I am sure I heard enough of it from the hunters, on their return to a late dinner in the evening. They discoursed and discussed the events and adventures of the chase with as much glee as I should have felt in those of a ball, and as much sporting pedantry as one of Gwyneth's country neighbours after a fox. She, who would in former days, have bounded with the thoughts of such an exciting scene as a bear hunt, and would have joined herself in the sport, had now no spirit or energy for anything of the kind. She listened to the learning of the initiated in bear hunts, of whom Prince Demetrius was the chief, with silent *ennui*, and was glad to

retire with me into her moderately furnished, but warm chamber, such as is to be found in a German country-house, and to read and work quietly by ourselves.

We had on this evening some conversation together about her present maternal prospects, and the hopes she had that Helvellyn would become more domestic. "But is he not so already?" said I. She sighed, and looked at me. I knew not how to interpret her meaning, but my conscience gave me an interpretation of its own, not far from the truth. She was preparing to say something, when her husband entered the room, and summoned us to tea, promising we should have no bear learning, as he called it, all the

party being now rather more drowsy than conversable, and only in want of our society and some tea to wake up.

Next day, according to our arrangement, we proceeded, in spite of excessive cold, much in the same order as before, to the Royal Schloss Pillnitz. We arrived an hour before the tournament, of which great expectations had been formed, was to begin. A great number of the society of Dresden were assembled by invitation, and of course a vast crowd of country folks, in their picturesque costumes. The crisp snow, and sparkling atmosphere, did not a little contribute to the local character of the scene, to us so fresh from the south; while the massive rocks, hung with icicles, and crowned with dark

pines, frosted, as it were, with silver, showed to me, as an artist, that there can be other principles and combinations of the picturesque in a landscape, besides those conventionally taken from the scenery of Italy or England. The Saxon Switzerland appeared certainly to great advantage in its winter garb.

The ladies, well wrapped in furs, were seated on a balcony under a spacious awning, with access to a saloon behind, well warmed by a couple of admirable German stoves. The balcony was tastefully ornamented in front with flags and arms of all the German States and Princes of the reign of Charles V., many of whom had their representatives present.

The Crown Prince did the honours with

great kindness and affability: he would have made me Lady of the Feast, and distributor of prizes to the knights; but wishing to avoid any such conspicuous situation, I begged Lady Helvellyn to decline it for me. Mr. Vassyll attempted to condole with me upon the loss of such a distinction, but a word sufficed to show him that he had taken the wrong line; and when Lady Helvellyn was afterwards persuaded to accept the vacant honour, he had tact enough to refrain from further remarks. Mr. Darcy told me *tout bonnement* he was sorry I had not accepted it at at once, as no more than what he would have given me.

The trumpets sounded, and the knights

paraded according to the circles of the empire from which they came. The standards of the Seven Electors were ranged so that each knight could place himself under his proper banner: all were most strictly habited and armed according to the numerous remains of the Middle Ages, to be seen in the museums of Dresden; and at last two valiant Counts—Hardenegg, of the Danube, and his worthy adversary, Rothenegg, of the Rhine—entered the lists.

After a skilful combat, in which victory was long doubtful, a false move of Count Rothenegg's horse placed him at the mercy of his opponent, and he fell amid shouts of "Hardenegg, *viva!* bravo, Hardenegg!" I will not

fatigue you with the other combats, in which those that won were declared to have won fairly; those that were overcome, to have fallen honourably. We had afterwards a splendid banquet, in one of the grotesque halls of the Japanese-looking castle of Pillnitz, and then retired to prepare for the ball in the evening.

The mimic warfare of the morning had not unfitted any of the company for the light gaieties of the dance. No knight had been wounded so severely as not to be able to waltz. All wore *costumés* in *alt-Deutsch*, the Countess Hildenheim in a magnificent dress, after a portrait by Lucas Cranach; I in that of Eleonora d'Este, and Gwyneth in a costume of the Court of Henry VIII. If the atten-

tions we received be a true index, we had no cause to complain of want of admiration. Mr. Vassyll paid me abundance of compliments; Mr. Darcy sighed. Prince Demetrius, who wore the rich sables of a Muscovite Boyar, of the time of Ivan, with the jewels most Russians are in the habit of carrying about with them, looked superb. My crown of diamond stars, however, I soon found was one of the chief attractions of the ball-room. The *corps diplomatique* declined wearing anything but their own distinctive dresses; Lord Helvellyn told the Crown Prince he would certainly have come as King Arthur, had he had time to collect twelve knights and a round table.

The whole *fête* went off so splendidly,

that not a single person, I believe, went away disappointed, unless it were Madame de Hildenheim, who failed in recovering her lost empire over Helvellyn. One week yet remained of the Carnival, and Lord Helvellyn, who usually contributed something to the festivities of the season, and was now really glad to see his wife gradually recovering her spirits, proposed to her to invite the whole company, as far as she was acquainted with them, to another ball, in which a more general and varied style of costume should be introduced, at his house on the last night of the Carnival. She readily assented, the Crown Prince being invited on the spot, and the plan of the whole thing arranged off-

hand. Next morning we returned to Dresden.

I had been extremely amused, as well as gratified, by my late manner of life; and the evidently growing attraction of Lord Helvellyn for my society was so great a conquest, after his former neglect of me, that my vanity was as deeply interested in his preference, as my heart was captivated by his attentions. This did not escape the penetrating glance of some of our *entourage*, and particularly of Prince Demetrius, who, with a degree of kindness it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge, said something he knew I should understand about the eyes of the world being upon his two most distinguished

friends, unconscious themselves of being the objects of remark. A similar hint was given to me with infinitely less good taste by the disappointed Mr. Vassyll, which I was almost provoked into treating as an insult.

Mr. Darcy continued my most faithful and despairing admirer, as he said himself; and I condescended so far as to allow his attentions, knowing that in a young *attaché*, *cela ne tire pas à conséquence*, besides, it diverted me.

The Embassy Ball in Dresden was as brilliant as that at Pillnitz had been. We had all the portrait-gallery of Dresden walking or dancing in their historical costume. Electors

of the time of Maximilian waltzing with Margravines of the age of Augustus; dreadful anachronisms to be sure, but very pretty to see. At that period everything *alt-Deutsch*, everything that recalled the glories of the empire, was alike popular with princes and people: the former have since found out their mistake, and discovered to their cost that, under the mask of German History, they have been fostering the serpent of German Democracy. All was gay, however, for the time, and an Elector Palatine, dressed correctly after Vandyke, did not waltz the worse for it; though some of the Holbeins, among whom was Mr. Vassyll, were, it must be confessed, rather stiff.

The palace of the Embassy was one of the few in the city of Dresden that had a handsome conservatory. It was a gallery filled with exotics, enlivened by a murmuring fountain in the middle, and beautifully lighted on this occasion. Mr. Darcy took the opportunity of telling me, as he found me seated under a fragrant jessamine bower, that he was desperately in love with me, knew it was of no use, could not help it, but must unburthen his mind; and so being at ease, asked me to waltz. I was glad to settle the matter so amicably, and graciously complied. Just as we left the conservatory, I espied Mr. Vassyll, pretending to examine critically a Venus-anadyomene, which stood, the presiding

goddess of the place, by a marble fountain, in the centre. I took no notice, and passed on. My dress was varied this time from that of Eleonora d'Este, to the Queen of Night, to which my crown of stars was more suitable.

The ball ended like all other balls, with a mixture of feelings, moral and physical: fatigue, satisfaction, vanity, disappointment, and every variety of good and bad spirits. I had every reason to be satisfied, except with myself. Poor Gwyneth, on the contrary, looked pale and ill, and sought to avoid me whenever she saw her husband near me, which was often, though he spoke little to me.

Our stay at Dresden drew near to a close; all my tastes had been gratified; but the kindness of Lord Helvellyn devised yet one *fête* more, for my special pleasure, which was to be musical.

I had paid great attention to German music lately, and in particular to that of the glory of Dresden, Sebastian Bach. I fre quented the celebrated Opera, and equally famous Catholic Church; I practised with a professor, still deeper and drier than Mendoza; I studied composition and instrumentation, and acoustics; I even made trials of my power in composing.

I had seen at Milan the fine fresco of Luini, representing the translation of the

body of St. Catherine, floating in the air, supported by angels, in which I was as much struck by the poetic spirit of the legend, as by the originality of the painting.

I had adopted the theory that the fine arts are all one under different phases, and that really beautiful conceptions of the mind may be expressed alike by adequate talent in Poetry, Painting, Music, and Sculpture. My philosophy was pleased at this, and Professor Eisenhaupt, my master, was in raptures with what he called my German ideas, though, in truth, they were rather due to the influence of Italy on my imagination. I therefore resolved, at some future time, to compose a cantata on the translation of St. Catherine.

I had other musical visions: "The Titans," a Grecian opera; "The Magdalen," a Catholic symphony; but they could not be executed at present. The works of genius are the inspiration of a moment; but the conveying them to the senses of others demands the labours of a life. No truly great artist, in any line, can afford to want either faculty. I wished to unite the seraphic melodies of the Sistine Chapel with the deep soul-grounded harmonies of the German school. But I am growing rather German myself, so I will pause.

Valérie during all this time read to me, or rather fed me with the cleverest French works, which gave me new and daring ideas, such as

our sophisticated life drinks in with pleasure, but which end in a mental intoxication.

Gwyneth's manner towards myself grew colder, and I felt hurt by it; but conscious of my false position towards her, I dared not hazard an observation on it. I suspect that Mr. Vassyll now, as before, gave her some hints with reference to her husband; I am not sure that she received them with incredulity, but I must ever do her the justice to believe that she discouraged them. Still, such intimations, when founded on truth, as these indeed were, must have an effect; and I think they sank deep into poor Gwyneth's heart, and accelerated her early end.

CHAPTER VII.

" Yes, weep ; for it is death to part,
'Tis death to part, and life to stay.
The anguish of a broken heart
Is all that I may bear away.

" Cold is thy form in my caress,
Mute are thy lips, and quenched the glow
Of those dark eyes, that sad express
Such deep, unutterable woe.

" I do not bid thee to forget,
Such were but idle words from me ;
For life is but a long regret,
Thus parted from thy love and thee.

" The moon's broad light streams down the sky,
Out of the night the deep stars shine;
What tempest of the soul is ours,
Whilst nature wears this face divine.

" I cannot weep: with me no tears
Relieve the torture of the brain;
I only see the lapse of years,
Where we may never meet again.

" Farewell, farewell, for all in vain,
The moral rule by which men dwell,
A love like ours unto restrain;
And so, farewell—a long farewell!"

THE spring advanced, the time for our departure drew nigh. The concert, of which I was to have the entire management and selection, was hastened; Helvellyn appeared

hurried, abstracted, full of anxiety about something; his wife too was evidently ill at ease, but not at all inclined, as formerly, to open her heart to me.

Part of my character is, or would be described as, totally inconsistent with the other; I am fiery and passionate when roused or otherwise deeply affected, but short of that point I am possessed of imperturbable, indomitable patience. I know how to bide my time, and repay myself for my constraint. I looked on with calmness, did not commit myself, or encourage Helvellyn, neither did I attempt such a false step as to affect confidential terms any longer with his wife. I was acting treacherously, but I could not stoop to

add hypocrisy to betrayal. I calmly attended to the rehearsals, turned over Handel and Mozart, and giving all my earnestness of spirit to the music, remained a statue of ice for the rest of the world. I believe the world were deceived, all but myself and Gwyneth.

Our departure was at hand, the day was fixed, and the concert was to take place the evening before it. The music was of mine and Helvellyn's selection, deep, impassioned, and thrilling; beginning with the old masters and ending with some of the most spirit-stirring compositions of the moderns, performed with all the resources of the present day. Everything went off well, and Helvellyn was so enraptured with my performance that he

seemed really to be possessed by some other spirit than that which usually regulated his actions. There was no longer that cautious and stately dignity that viewed and treated everything with calm reflection: to this had succeeded transports of admiration and unrepressed compliments to myself and my talents, which even went beyond my own opinion of my deserts.

While the guests were departing, Lord Helvellyn met me in the conservatory and said, in a hurried manner: "Lamia, dear Lamia, I beg, I pray, meet me in this spot at midnight!" I was taken quite by surprise, and ere I had time to bestow a thought upon the step I was about to commit myself to, as

anxious to avoid the notice of any of the retiring guests as of the servants, I uttered the fatal word "Yes!"

The die was cast, I had with my own lips said it.

We separated. I went to my apartment, and desired Eloise not to sit up for me; and as the hour of midnight is not much later than the closing of a house in Germany after an evening party, I returned to the conservatory after a short time with a book in my hand, as if going to replace it in the library. I had previously wished Helvellyn a pretended good night, and even if perceived, I flattered myself that my movements would be easily accounted for.

On my return, I seated myself near the fountain, which still continued to play in its marble basin, mournfully illuminated by the single alabaster lamp that remained.

I still held my book, without even pretending to read; the rustling of the beautiful exotics which exhaled a luxurious perfume, the gurgling of the waters, even the memory of the soft sounds of music with which scarce an hour ago I had been enraptured; all this, added to a certain curiosity, a certain fear, as to what was coming, worked up my feelings to such a pitch of nervous excitement as I had never before experienced.

The stillness, where all had so lately been brilliant gaiety, the quick transition from an

almost courtly circle to the solitude, but, ah! not the silence, of my own thoughts, had something awful in it which made me shudder. But I had done nothing. It was the anticipatory reproach of conscience.

There is something always melancholy in the quick change from the pomps and pageantry of the world to the simple state of nature. For such is night, sleep, darkness, repose, after the many unnatural and unnecessary fatigues of a day's life in this civilized and artificial world. How truly and beautifully is this expressed by the old Spanish poet, who says:

"Que se hicieron las damas,
Sus tocadas, sus vestidos,
Sus olores?

" Que se hicieron las llamas
De los fuegos encendidos
De amadores ?

" Que se hizo aquel trovar
Qas musicas acordadas
Que tañian ?

" Que se hizo aquel danzar
Aquellas rosas chapadas
Que traian ?

Que fueron sino desvaneos
Que fueron sino verduras
De las eras ?"

" What is become of those lovely dames,
Their jewels, perfumes, and bright attire,
And tall plumes flying ?

"What is become of those ardent flames,
Lighted from Passion's wildest fire,
For lovers sighing?

"What is become of the soft romance?
What is become of the joyous song,
And the music of the lover?

"Where is now that graceful dance,
Tripping the rosy path along?
Ah! all is over!

"'Twas but a vision's hasty glance;
Fading flowers on a garland hung,
Ne'er to recover!"

But, to me, this passing away of the pageant of the hour was like the passing

away of life. I felt already that a new world was to begin for me to-morrow. Tearful apprehensions of I knew not what, guilty feelings of my treachery to Gwyneth, more and more oppressed me, and I trembled.

Perhaps I waited but few minutes, but it seemed a life, for his arrival. I never felt alone before. I had just come from the only good, the only pious work I could now claim as mine. I had seen my poor and enfeebled father in his bed—according to my custom—before I descended, having left Valérie in my room. Ah! what were my self-reproaches, knowing his high sense of honour, his deep feeling of the duties of women, of female purity, of the honour of his race. My calm-

ness quite abandoned me. I would retreat—I would fly—but I was as bound to the spot. At that moment Helvellyn entered.

With the same rapid and passionate glance I had remarked in him before, he hurried to my side; he fell at my feet, and seizing both my hands, which I, in powerless agitation, abandoned to him, protested his despair at parting from me, and, sobbing, avowed that his passion was more than he could conquer. Suddenly, he asked me, could I—could the Lamia of his heart—sacrifice for him, what he was ready, at a moment's notice, to sacrifice for her? Could she, as he would, leave country, home, station, and renown—yea, everything, for him and love? Would she

fly with her own—her Helvellyn—to some distant shore, and hide in another hemisphere the sins of this? Is she capable of such tremendous sacrifice?

He paused, and as I saw that noble countenance, that manly brow, those eyes bright with beauty and lustrous with passion, I thought there was something fearful in the convulsions with which the struggles of the human heart can agitate the frame.

He continued wildly to urge my consent: talked with scorn of the judgments of this world, and with defiance of those of the world to come: he was no moral coward, and could brave the chimeras of both one and the other. Could I?

Again he paused. I made no answer. He proceeded :

"Can I live without you? No! Can you live without me? Try!"

He said this with terrific, and almost supernatural vehemence.

"My reply is here," laying his hand on his heart.

As yet, *I* had made no reply.

That look — that agonizing look — that appeal to my courage, unnerved me. Still, I had not consented.

"My father!" the only words I spoke.

These words alone, from innate conviction, seemed to strike him. They were the only

remnant of virtue I could summon to my assistance.

Then, solemnly, and as if coming to a final decision, he fixed his eyes on me, and said:

"If, in three months' time, you love me still as now, I will follow you to England, and we will fly from the world—no matter where—but fly together."

He still held my hands in his, and paused.

I pronounced, with less calm, but not with less decision, the fatal "Yes!" which has been, and will be, a leaden weight upon my breast from that day to my grave.

He was at my knees, sobbing inarticulately his love, when I was suddenly startled by a movement among the branches.

It was a moment for even an innocent superstition to have exercised its power—what must it have been for the consciences of two such persons! The cold and angry moon darted its silver rays through the trembling evergreens, not more trembling than our hearts: they fell with an icy lustre on the marble statue of the crouching Venus, and on the sparkling fountain thus sharply relieved from the gloom behind. But on what else did those silver rays fall, and discover in melancholy beauty, far transcending either marble form or crystal fountain? What shadowy figure is that issuing from a seat in the niche behind the statue, so closely shrouded with foliage, that the dim light had not enabled us to penetrate

it? Is there one being whose presence, at that moment, would strike terror into both our guilty hearts? One, and one alone, could, by her simple presence on the spot, by her calm dignity, her eye that need not flinch, her cheek that needs no blush, cast headlong our bold and guilty spirits from the pride of almost premeditated crime to the depths of irrevocable despair.

Such, at least, were my feelings, when Lady Helvellyn emerged from the darkness, and stood, in a majesty of beauty such as I had never before seen in her, and which lofty virtue alone can give, before, nay, almost between me and her husband.

Lord Helvellyn started up at the sight of

this phantom—for such it appeared to him—and with that look, that extraordinary look, that had once before, in the same evening, alarmed me by its dark and fearful expression, seemed on the point of giving way to a demoniacal violence.

I shuddered. His wife calmly, but solemnly, waved her hand, which seemed, with superhuman power, to keep him at a distance, and said: "I did not come here to watch or to reproach you. My presence, the effect of a sleepless night, is most involuntary. Lamia, you whom I thought my friend—you whom I have trusted and loved—Lamia, farewell, for ever! May we never meet again! Never can I behold you more; for,

after what has passed, I feel that I can never, never forgive you ! I would not change places with you, even to obtain *his* love, of which you have robbed me. God grant that we may never meet again !"

Without a further word, even to her husband, the unhappy wife slowly withdrew behind the shrubs. As I saw her for the last time, fade like a shadowy vision among the flowers, it seemed as if my last breath, my last chance of redemption in this life, was in the act of passing away from me. That fair, careworn face, that spectral frame, will never pass from my memory.

How I left the spot, I know not : I buried my face in my hands. Helvellyn was there,

I knew him not: with a frantic energy, I rose; I clasped, I wrung my hands, and rushed in frenzy from the fatal spot. I gained my apartment, where the faithful Valérie had long been waiting my return with anxiety. She was aware that my feelings had been for some time in a state of nervous agitation, though she knew not the cause. The present was no moment for explanations. Valérie soothed and attended me with the most affectionate care, but I had ever that scene before my eyes: I saw, again and again, the unworldly countenance of that pure and injured woman, calmly reproaching me for my treachery; I saw the passionate and all but frantic expression of his coun-

tenance; a chaos of mingled feelings of love, remorse, terror, accompanied these visions through my brain, as I lay, thrown on my couch, waiting with impatience till daylight dawned. Whenever the face of Helvellyn, transported with fearful rage, presented itself to my feverish eyes, I felt anew that indescribable pang shoot through my head, as if premonitory of an awful fate for me as well as for him.

Valérie was unceasing in her care, and towards morning I grew calmer; but sleep never visited my eyelids. At the first glimpse of daylight I feebly looked around, and the first object that met my eyes was the diamond crown of stars, which Valérie,

had removed from my unconscious, my unworthy brow, on my return to my chamber. The sight recalling, as it did, old and new feelings, good and bad, was too much for me, and I burst into a flood of tears. I thought of my good sister, her tremendous prophecy, for such her pathetic warning was now proved to be : I remembered too well with what different feelings she wore it, and yet a fatal gift had it been to her. I wept and wept again.

Partially relieved, I heard the preparations for our early departure, and mechanically allowed Eloise and Marie to dress me, while Valérie reposed. Then, after bathing my aching head in icy water, as a means

of fortifying me against a fatiguing day's journey, I repaired to my father, whom I found already up, and Helvellyn by his side.

He did not speak: I was incapable of a word. As he led me to the carriage, however, he with a silent but convulsive pressure of my hand, placed in it a letter, which I could not refuse to take. I was obliged to restrain my feelings, as Mr. Vassyll was there watching with courtly malice and attention, and Mr. Darcy truly lamenting our departure.

I found in the letter the same passionate style, the same entreaties as before; he gave me three months for reflec-

tion: it contained every sophistry and argument that a man of intense feeling and mad passion, of extraordinary talent and little principle, could suggest. I read it alone. Terribly shaken as I was, it was necessary to take an immediate determination; and by a returning sense of virtue, of what was due to myself as a woman, by the inspiration perhaps of my guardian angel, by the thought of my good sister, I resolved not to answer it, but to do my best to banish Helvellyn from my thoughts.

The journey passed like a tedious dream, and at last we arrived at the antique walls of Rainham.

CHAPTER VIII.

" Passions are likened best to floods and streams,
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb.
So when affections yield discourse, it seems
The bottom is but shallow, whence they come.
They that are rich in words must need discover,
They are but poor in that which makes a lover."

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

" Such seem'd the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried,
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied,

" So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower.

" And forth into the fields I went,
And nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

" I wondered, while I paced along,
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seemed no room for sense of wrong."

TENNYSON.

THE regular, monotonous life of a journey, and the wise, for the time virtuous, resolutions I had formed, restored me to a degree of calmness and health of body and mind that I had not anticipated; I found myself at home, determined to try to lead a new life, and to occupy myself in all the useful ways which had made my sister happy herself, and beloved by others. I was sure,

that in taking Iris as an example, I should at least do what was most pleasing to my father, now my chief object in life. For the future I would not speculate, but after the mental trials I had gone through, was but too content to leave it a mysterious void.

We found you, Henry, as you must well remember, the sole tenant of Rainham Abbey, at the very threshold, awaiting our arrival. You found me changed, and kindly assisted both my father and myself in settling ourselves anew in our old house. You continued to be its inmate, my father's health made him more and more dependent on you for various matters of business; and your presence, welcome as it was on other

grounds, prevented the total want of society, to which our unwillingness to receive visitors at that time exposed us. Believe, even in these melancholy moments in which I am writing, I look back to our agreeable walks and rides, your assistance in country and household business, your good choice of books and studies (for to you was I indebted for all the solid instruction I at that time attained), to your society—in a word, for the most satisfactory period of my life. You entered into my better character, you were happily not aware of its faults; you took a pleasure in trying to make perfect such capacity as that better half presented to you, and shut your eyes benevolently to the way-

ward temper that you could not be totally blind to. I freely conversed with you on all subjects of literature and art, of history, of our travels, and of philosophical subjects in general: you tried to lead me into the right path on all topics, even on the dim and misty subject of religion.

You knew not my story. You knew not the gnawing worm, the canker of remorse which lay ever at my heart; and fondly thought that, with such dispositions as I manifested, I must be fairly in the way of salvation. In all I said, and all the imperfect good that I exhibited, I was perfectly sincere: hypocrisy is no part of my failings; I am inconsistent, but not insincere.

In truth, I was then for a time in the right road; my repentance for the irremediable sorrow I had caused my sister, whom every object at Rainham brought with double force and bitter pangs to my recollection; my remorse for the wicked and treacherous conduct I had held towards Lady Helvellyn; all tended to make me eager to pursue the beneficent plans of the former from a feeling of affection, and to equal in goodness, from a desire to atone for my sins toward the latter. My father's declining health did not prevent his taking great pleasure in seeing me thus employed, he said it brought Iris to his mind, and affectionately owned that he had idolized her injudiciously to my prejudice. He was

now happy in me—happy in seeing me cultivate my intellect with your severer taste; and with the true feeling of a country gentleman, rejoiced that there was one of the family left active enough to look after, and kind enough to care for, the people on the estate.

With this view, I sought out all the old persons whom I knew to have been my sister's pensioners; I tried my talent at schooling, ill adapted as I was for anything of the kind; and I even endeavoured to catechise and lecture the children on their religious belief. This was the hardest of all: for when one has but an ill-grounded faith oneself, how can one forcibly impress it upon others? It is one of the evils of philosophy,

that although it may lead by direct, yet laborious, paths to the sublimest notions of creative wisdom and power, it takes away to a certain extent the faculty of persuasion; by requiring convincing proofs, most satisfactory to minds of a certain stamp, it is less applicable to weaker intellects, which are chiefly open to persuasion in proportion as they see that their teacher is persuaded too. I was in earnest, my earnestness went some way with my pupils, my reasoning none.

At times I visited my sister's observatory, and turned my thoughts to the same subjects, by remembering how a profound and mathematical study had led her calm, but inquiring mind, to the loftiest conceptions of Provi-

dence, by the severe analysis of His grandest works. "Nothing," she would say, "proved the existence of God so much as the conviction of the necessity of an Almighty Power to produce, or even to imagine, such wondrous systems as the universe displays." Then would I raise my eyes to the dark azure vault canopied with stars, and think myself too humble to be regarded by the Author of such magnificence. Immediately, and as if sent on purpose, the hum of some minutely perfect night-insect, or the breezy fragrance of some aromatic evening flower, would remind me that there were myriads of lovely, inimitable things in the creation at a far lower step on the scale than man. I looked from the material to the moral world: I beheld

the same wisdom, the same Power in the immaterial as in the material world. Then, my pangs of memory and remorse would shoot across my brain: then I would doubt and quarrel with God, then with floods of tears return to the tomb of my sister and mother, and on my knees implore pardon, pardon. Nearer to goodness than I had yet ever been, I was still nearer to madness. But Iris, who had no better religious education than myself, how did she escape these trials? I murmured, as if ill-used; then thought what a guardian angel my sister would have been to me, had she lived, and had I quenched my childish jealousy of her; then I cried, "Dead, dead!" and wept piteously.

Once, as I looked upon that starry crown

which had encircled my poor sister's brow on her fatal birth-night, and, filled with consciousness of my own unfitness to wear it, I put the brilliant toy aside, a sudden recollection flashed across my mind of a conversation that had once passed between us on the subject of our favourite studies.

Iris had been eloquently and earnestly setting before me the noble views opened to her by astronomy, and said:

"Had no other branch of deep science or captivating nature been accessible to the intellectual powers of man, I think astronomy alone would lead him up to God. You, Lamia, you too have a divine talent in

your powers of music, which charm the feelings as completely as my favourite study compels the reason to acknowledge the all-pervading Power that rules within us as without us, and by harmonious systems combines, sustains, and renews the universal frame of nature. Cultivate that talent, Lamia; the genius of music will not lead you astray; its divine sounds will raise your heart to Heaven, even when words fail to convince your reason."

Inspired with these thoughts, I enthusiastically applied myself to music, which I had for a while laid aside. It was one of the few pleasures left to my father; and I saw, with equal satisfaction, that you were

not indifferent to it. I had both science and practice, you endeavoured to turn my taste to the graver style of church music, in order to improve the service of your church, and I willingly lent my aid towards that object.

The contrast between my existence at that period, my subdued passions and quiet employments, and the worldly life I had been living abroad—even had not the last stormy agitation of my mind occurred—was so great that I began insensibly to think that I might be reconciled to an unobtrusive country life, and that the change from the high places of this world to what was comparative obscurity, might be more sooth-

ing to a sore and wounded spirit than any distraction that the world could afford; for my conscience still smote me about Gwyneth —severe and just as her resolution not to see me more undoubtedly was, which my humbled heart could not gainsay—still ardently did I long for some opportunity, in silence and unknown, to make her some reparation for the injury I had nearly done her, and to find some vent for my overflowing penitence.

This train of thought had gradually worked so great an alteration in my temper and manner, that I was hardly the same creature I had been before. You, I saw, were more than pleased at the surprising

change in me—you acknowledged to me candidly that you were so. We were as brother and sister; my father, all the household observed our intimacy.

Why were we not more than that to each other? I admired your character; my sore heart asked now no other love than yours. Ah, how I longed for an opening on your part!—now I may say it. I wished for it to take place before the three months elapsed, after which I could not escape from a renewal of Helvellyn's solicitations. I feared my own weakness—I even feared Helvellyn's impetuosity.

After great apparent doubt and hesitation on your side, but certainly no affecta-

tion of coyness on mine, in a walk you cannot forget, under the aged chestnut grove in the park, you made your proposals; you spoke frankly, earnestly, truly, as is your wont; I answered only by floods of tears. At last I audibly pronounced the awful "Yes!" which formed so strong a contrast to the guilty yes I had three short months before given to the importunate Helvellyn, that my heart beats violently at the recollection; but my feeling now was intense joy, it was a virtuous thankfulness for the means of escape from a most trying complication of circumstances—means afforded almost miraculously; it seemed like a plank of salvation thrown out to a drowning mariner.

Your happiness, Henry, seemed—nay, was —equal to mine: we prolonged our walk till dusk, to talk freely and affectionately over future prospects, to explain previous silence, to communicate the thousand things that cannot be said before, nor at least half so well as after the final mutual understanding.

Why did I not then frankly unburthen my heart, and disclose my whole story to an honourable and affectionate bridegroom? I had done nothing, though too nearly guilty in mind: I might have thrown myself at his feet, made confession, and obtained absolution from one so conscientious as you. If not before, then nothing ought to have withheld my explanation, painful and humiliating as it must have

been, from my betrothed. That, if not a fault, was the crowning error of my life: my silence sealed my doom.

I little thought how near the catastrophe was approaching. As we drew near the Abbey we met the postman, who gave me a letter. I sat down on a fallen tree to read it.

I need not relate to you anything of that fatal evening. All that I distinctly remember of it is that I took the letter without immediately looking at it, and turning to you, said: "How this heavenly sunset is giving a fit and glorious finish to the brilliant summer's day. May such be an emblem of our lives, dearest Henry." And you, with looks of adoration, of true and holy love, replied: "Lamia, dearest,

may God above, who sees us, bear witness to the depth, the sincerity, the purity of my attachment." The last beams of the sinking sun were glancing through the verdant branches of the aged chestnut-trees which formed our rustic canopy; the birds, retiring to their happy home, carolled forth their thankful song—their hymn of praise: all around us breathed the air of content and peace.

Suddenly on opening the letter, which I now remarked was in mourning, I saw at a glance from whom it came. An instant sufficed to make me mistress of its contents; I gave a scream, when, pierced by a demoniac pang that shot through my brain, I flung myself on the ground, and knew no more.

Oh! day of horrors and of retribution, yet not the last which the wretched Lamia was to know in her eventful life. I saw you no more till long, very long afterwards.

How I was conveyed to the house, I cannot say; I found myself on recovering, late in the night, supported in my bed by Valérie and Eloise; the first words I heard were: "*Mon Dieu! elle respire.*" I then sank back into a state of insensibility. But again, towards morning, I revived, and by Valérie's care, and the help of strong restoratives, I came to myself sufficiently to collect what had happened. A flood of tears came seasonably to my relief.

It was broad daylight; I began to look

around me. The fatal letter, folded, lay on my little table. The attendants had left the room. I dared to take up the letter.

Too well had I understood it the day before, but now I had only a confused remembrance of its purport. I read it again.

It was brief, but passionate. In it Helvellyn told me of the death of the unhappy Gwyneth (whom I from my heart lamented more than he did) in her confinement. After alluding, in vague, wild terms, to our mutual love and engagements, he said he should hasten home to claim my hand, and to accept a high office that had been tendered him in the English Cabinet.

How slowly does the mind regain its powers after a violent shock, such as I received! how small a part of one's intellectual faculties is that consciousness, the presence of which is, or seems to be, the criterion between life and death. I lay perfectly aware of my existence, of the certainty of some great misfortune, and of my utter inability to remedy it: but long I lay incapable of putting ideas together, in other words, of reasoning, so as to draw any conclusion as to what had happened, or to form any plan in consequence. The sight, however, of Helvellyn's letter gradually, but painfully, recalled me to my senses.

It was plain that I had let it drop, equally

plain to my mind that you, assuming, from the new position in which we were just placed, a right to see what had so strongly affected me, must have read it; and then, the inference was not doubtful, you must have fled in horror.

The moment this conviction flashed upon me, another pang darted through my brain, I lost my senses anew, I screamed, I raved, till I brought my weeping Valérie to my side. I cried, "Henry, Henry, where is he?"

"He left the Abbey early this morning," said she, leaving this letter in my hands. "I can answer that none else have seen it."

It was then too true: on the verge of hap-

piness, of that heavenly love, which is the sure haven to an almost shipwrecked soul, I had lost my last chance of peace in this world. Tears came to my relief; I sobbed myself to sleep, and after a feverish night, woke only to a new, but calmer sorrow. I was now able to reflect that you, learning from Helvellyn's wild and passionate expressions of love and previous engagements, the first intimation of any sort of attachment between us, must have believed me a monster of dishonour and deceit. You, who had only seen Helvellyn the ardent admirer of Iris, and ready to neglect poor Gwyneth for her, could have had no idea that he could so soon have transferred his affections to me; but you

could not with such evidence, and your former distrust of his character now disbelieve it.

His cold announcement of his wife's sad death, as allowing him to fulfil the wish of his heart as speedily as he could come to England, proved the fact of our previous mutual understanding; but the happy, yes, happy removal, I say, of poor injured Gwyneth from a world of woe, rendering unnecessary any allusion to the guilty project of flight to another hemisphere, fortunately left you in ignorance of the depth of iniquity to which I had so nearly sunk. Had time been granted for explanation, or had I summoned courage at once to confess to you, my betrothed, my

whole history, and to open the secrets of my heart, you would have learnt that, however far beneath the standard of ideal excellence to which you in your love were ready to assign me, I was yet not thoroughly guilty. You would have learnt, and I am sure would have had too much Christian charity to despise the contrite heart that clung to you, whom it had chosen as the sole present means of salvation.

Alas! the next day brought a confirmation of my suspicions. A cold, but warning, letter from you, informed me that our proposed union was at an end. This I might have conjectured for the present; but you added that explanation was impossible, that

you should not return to Rainham, and had already made excuses to my father—who was happily in ignorance of our short-lived engagement and arrangements—with respect to your church.

All this was so easy to foresee, that though it sunk me still deeper into misery, it inflicted no new blow. After weeks of lethargy and stupor, I so far recovered my health, but not my spirits, as to be able to resume my accustomed care of my father, who, though much alarmed at my illness, had no idea that it was occasioned by anything but one of my gradually increasing nervous attacks, from which I now began to suffer almost habitually.

CHAPTER IX.

"Go where we will, this hand in thine,
Those eyes before me, smiling thus
Through good or ill, through storm and shine,
The world's a world of love to us!
On some calm, blessed shore we'll dwell,
Where 'tis no crime to love too well;—
Where thus to worship tenderly
An erring child of light like thee
Will not be sin—or if it be,
Where we may weep our faults away,
Together kneeling, night and day,
Thou for my sake, at Alla's shrine,
And I—at any god's for thine."

MOORE.

I HAD to struggle much with myself in

conversation with my father, who could not understand why your projected visit to a friend in the North of England should make you take such an affecting leave of him as it seems you had done, nor why it should keep you, in all probability (your own words, he said), from Rainham Abbey for an indefinite length of time. He also had been informed of poor Gwyneth's death, and evidently wondered at the constrained manner in which I joined in his condolences on it. Heaven knows if any human being grieved over her as I did. But I trembled, lest by giving vent to my feelings, I might commit myself in such a way as to render explanation necessary. My father's heart was too warm, not

to regret that kind and amiable young woman; his feelings too pure and disinterested, to be struck immediately with the opening this circumstance afforded for realizing his former favourite scheme of making Helvellyn his son-in-law; and I am glad that it was so, as it doubtless spared me much awkwardness, as things were.

I learnt that my father had written to Dresden, to invite him to Rainham: this decided me, at last, to write to him myself. I begged him to wait; of course, saying nothing of what had passed between you and me. Three months, in fact, elapsed before he could arrive. I corresponded with him; but it was with a heavy heart. My path was

chosen, my lot was fixed: there was no other possible. I tried to revive my former feelings, in all their freshness: I failed entirely. I admired Helvellyn as before; he was the same in beauty, talent, and renown: but sometimes, I was not the same; I was no longer the fresh, headstrong girl; rash, and braving the world. Was I better? Was I worse?

The fact was, I had learnt—bitterly learnt—rather too much of the world. I had escaped some of its dangers, I had missed some of its blessings; I saw too plainly what was bad; I acknowledged that there was some good in the world: but my relative position to that good and that bad, what was

it? I was not good enough to reject Helvellyn for his want of principle; I was not bad enough to be blind to it. I had escaped the greater evil, and lost a greater good; but I had not principle enough myself to be averse to an union with him, now it could take place honourably.

On his return from Dresden, Lord Helvellyn was made Cabinet Minister, and distinguished himself greatly in a political crisis which then occurred. He wrote to me repeatedly, begging to be allowed to come; which, from a mixture of feelings, I had constantly put off. I dreaded the renewal of our intimacy, from sheer remorse at the recollection of the previous commencement of it.

Gwyneth haunted me—not as an unkind or evil spirit—but there she was, her image was ever before me. Pure herself, my morbid imagination, my conscience, dressed her in terrors, as I deserved to see her.

At last, my father earnestly wishing to see him, Helvellyn announced his coming for a certain day. He came. I will not describe my agitation, or his raptures: it seemed he was become, with equal wit and talent, still more impetuous than ever; and I could never divest his countenance, in my eyes, of that ominous expression which first struck me on that fatal night—that crisis of my fate—in Dresden. Those eyes were still brilliant and sparkling, but more piercing;

ever seeking to see something more. The same noble brow had perhaps a greater habit of contraction; the mouth, ever fine, was more compressed; the physiognomy, though exquisitely playful and intellectual, was, but only occasionally, a trifle more stern than formerly. I had on my lips the name of Gwyneth—I could never pronounce it to him: not even for form's sake.

He had much conversation with my father, who joyfully consented to his proposals. He pressed for an immediate union, which I, unaccountably timorous, at first opposed.

The living of Rainham, as you remember, then fell vacant. Lord Rainham lost no time in presenting you to it, and wrote to

you to come and celebrate the marriage at the Abbey. You accepted the living gratefully, but, unexpectedly to all but myself, you excused yourself from performing the marriage ceremony. You did, I remember, promise to arrive the same day, after the wedding, and then to take possession of your living, and remain with my father. All this was not very intelligible to him, but was kindly acceded to, as being your wish. I pass quickly over all this, as a period most distressing for me to write of, and for you to be reminded of. Alas! that I cannot obliterate this, and more, from my memory.

The only really joyous person at that time was my faithful and attached Valérie, who was

so glad at the prospect of seeing me marry anybody worthy of what she considered my merits, that she was transported at the thoughts of it. I for many reasons wished the wedding to be private. My recollections of Rainham Abbey, though I was dearly attached to it, had not been of a festive character; and the only time I had ever seen its grey walls decked gaily for a feast, had been marked by the sad catastrophe which finally led to the untimely end of my poor sister Iris.

Those events were ever fresh in the memory of my father, and they certainly were not blotted from that of Helvellyn, though, fo obvious reasons, he never alluded to

them. My proposal of a private wedding, late at night, by special licence, in the Abbey Chapel, to be followed by our immediate departure from Rainham, was suitable to all persons concerned; and it was arranged to take place on the following Friday. Inauspicious day! Why did I not follow the whisperings of my superstitious imagination, or rather the true forebodings of my coward heart? perhaps Heaven, in its mercy, would have withheld the awful sequel of my ill-starred marriage.

I will not, I cannot describe it; I only remember the lighted chapel—the grave, sad statues of my pious mother and injured sister—the hurried nervousness of Helvellyn

—the taking leave of my now, indeed, solitary father—all this nearly overcame me; and when I received from his infirm hands the parting blessing, solemnly bestowed upon a beloved child, and in which I was sickened to remark that he omitted all allusion to a hope of seeing me again, I could stand it no longer; but after a look towards my mother' tomb—(her, at least, of all belonging to me I had never injured)—I burst into tears, and was conveyed to the carriage which awaited us. Valérie left me with sobs at the very door, it having been arranged that she should stay as companion to my almost helpless father.

Once in the carriage, we started with the

speed that four horses can exert on matrimonial occasions. Helvellyn, who was truly fond of my father, tried affectionately and considerately to comfort me in the apprehensions, too well-founded, which I felt at parting from him: he promised me my father's picture (which I happened to know he had sate for some time before); he did everything to keep up my spirits, reiterated his declarations of love and unalterable affection for me; and in spite of his warmth and evident pleasure in recalling our former knowledge of each other at Rainham and at Dresden, had the tact and good taste, the real kindness, to abstain from touching on any point which he knew must call up

recollections unpleasant or harassing to my feelings.

I was now his wife. The servants calling, at the St. Edmundsbury station, "The Marquis and Marchioness of Helvellyn," would not let me forget that. I was more in love with him than ever, now I could lawfully be so; and I began to feel that ease and satisfaction, that repose in an honest and faithful love, which my former ill-stifled attachments had never allowed my heart to experience.

CHAPTER X.

"A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
Grey mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
Of darkness in the north:—the day was dying:—
Sudden the sun shone forth; its beams were lying
Like boiling gold on ocean, strange to see,
And on the shattered vapours, which, defying
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
In the red heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

* * * *

"Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;
Not life—it was despair to be! Not sleep;

For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossest
All natural dreams : * * * * *

"I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet,
Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed
My soul with their own joy—one moment yet
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!"

SHELLEY.

THE magic power of steam transported us through the night, and the whole of a bright, but chill March day, from Suffolk to Wales. Duval, the valet, had been sent forward to prepare things for us, at Caer-Wynn. Helvellyn was full of his descriptions to me of the picturesque and gloomy character of the place. Gloomy, indeed, I found it!—but as yet all was a rapid, feverish dream. I hardly

remember the journey, till we left the rail, and the carriage began toiling up a steep and heathy mountain, whose topmost crags were still sprinkled with the winter's snow.

"This is not railway speed," said Helvellyn, impatiently, "nor are these your Ipswich horses. Come, I must tell you a little of the country. This is Cairndhu, the black mount; yonder is a rock called Dollcloath; that is Craig Owen, from the top of which, if not dark, we shall see Helvellyn Mountain and Caer-Wynn."

He told me fairy legends and stories of every nook and glen, and the names of all the Jenkins ap Joneses to whom the properties belonged. He seemed to have at heart that I should know the country well.

Some miles further on, we passed a lovely waterfall, whose snowy foam reached almost to the carriage wheels: near it was a humble church, standing on a green, and almost under the shade of some aged birch-trees; the hamlet to which it belonged was composed of neat white cottages, far better than the cabins of rocks and rough slate we had hitherto seen.

"What is the name of this?" I asked.

To my surprise, he averted his eyes hastily, and made no reply.

"Tell me, dear," I said, "who does this belong to?"

Still no answer.

"Do, do, tell me," I repeated, with earnestness.

"It now belongs to me," he said, with an altered voice, which hurt me, and I remained silent, till, two minutes afterwards, a quick turn in the road, round a jutting rock, fringed with the drooping birch, brought us in sight of a charming little village inn, before which were assembled a crowd of peasants in their best dresses, the women habited just as poor Gwyneth used to be when going to the chase. Looking up, I saw the Powell Arms, with a Welsh motto I had often remarked on Gwyneth's seal, and which she used to call her warm Welsh welcome. I believe it means, "Well be it with ye that come in the name of the Lord." The country folks, among whom I could

fancy I saw the form of Gwyneth herself, made their obeisances, but in solemn silence: it was meant for a welcome, but it was the saddest of welcomes; I saw mourning in every face for the beloved mistress whose place I had usurped: Helvellyn was not unmoved.

"Morgan Jones," he cried, "my fool of a steward, ought to have prevented this;" and threw himself back in the corner of the carriage, covering his face from my sight, with an angry movement not common with him. I, choking with a degree of emotion I could hardly repress, felt ready to sink into the earth at the shock this scene of an instant had given me. It was all clear as

day, this was a portion of Gwyneth's property; and even the iron nerve and self-control of Helvellyn did not enable him to name it to me. Those poor rustics could not welcome a new, a strange successor to their kind mistress, one who spoke not their language, and knew not their simple manners. And there was her own hospitable motto, her Welsh welcome—her blessing to those who come in the name of the Lord.

"I, come in the name of the Lord! I, the traitor, the usurper of her husband's heart, almost her murderess! I, whose base conduct sent her early, but surely, to the grave, welcomed to her house in the Lord's

name !" The bitterest enemy could not have devised a sharper sting—a more cutting irony than this. I fell almost into hysterics. Helvellyn, absorbed, did not notice me in the dark, for it seemed to grow dark quite suddenly, and we rolled on in silence and in gloom.

But even this was not my last welcome from the shade of Gwyneth.

Deadened with fatigue and emotion, I saw nothing more during the remainder of this agitated journey ; left to my own thoughts, I could see in myself nothing but the scarce lawful possessor of a place once my friend's—once, indeed, destined to my sister : the betrayer of their happiness and of yours, Henry ;

for think not that my conscience was free from remorse on your account, either in regard to the former or the latter times.

At last, descending a steep hill, the fresh sea-breeze, not to be mistaken, made me aware we were drawing near our future home, if home it were to be to us. Lights on an eminence were soon apparent, and as we heard the roaring of the waves, Helvellyn, with a sudden start, and complete recovery of his usual impassioned manner, exclaimed: "There it is; see there your future abode: there may we pass many—many happy years. Lady of the Castle! I salute you." So saying, he caught me in his arms, and embraced me with all the fervour of passion; and I,

trembling and happy, yet not without a sigh of misgiving at his confident words, sank upon his breast.

Not all the blustering of the cold March wind, as it drove the mists up from the channel, whose breakers were becoming more and more audible from the rising gale, could drown the noise of the domestics who thronged to receive us at the massive portal of Caer-Wynn. Loud creaked the chains as the old drawbridge was lowered, and for a moment, forgetful of the past, I thought myself happy. But the ominous sound of the portcullis as it fell behind me, gave an awful presage of terror, and I said, as unconcernedly as I could: "How like a prison!"

"Would I could ever keep you here!" passionately exclaimed Helvellyn.

We were at the door. The court was small; the castle having been a real fortress, only refitted in modern times, and still retaining all its feudal character: every arch was Gothic, every tower machicolated, every wall strongly embattled. Above it, at a distance, rose the peaks of Snowdon; below it, foamed the tempestuous waves of the Irish Sea.

Entering the low, well-guarded porch, we traversed hastily, to avoid servants, some small rooms that seemed to lie round the court; then, turning suddenly through a low, arched passage which reminded me of Rainham, we came to a lofty but irregular-shaped

hall, vaulted with solid oak and paved with stone; round it were various antique weapons, fantastically disposed, and shields bearing various family arms and devices. Helvellyn paused to make me observe a Damascus rapier, brought from the Holy Land by one of his ancestors in the crusade of Cœur-de-Lion; as he drew it to show me the magical characters embossed in gold with which the blade was enriched, he said it had been the trusty talismanic sword of Owen Glendower, from whom, said he, smiling like a portrait of Titian, you know we are descended. "Therefore," he added, "let not any strange sights or wild witchery surprise you here: we are often haunted by the spirits called

from the vasty deep (which you now hear roaring below) by the old wizard, and which he forgot to lay again. But you, my enchantress, shall chain them all, as you have your husband."

As he thus spoke, his handsome face was reflected from a brightly-polished cuirass (which had been Hotspur's), and he looked more like a Paladin of old, with charmed scimitar in hand, than any being of our modern, tame, monotonous century. I gazed on him with looks of love; in that moment I forgot all but Helvellyn.

He turned aside; a shade came over his countenance as he espied a box of despatches awaiting him, which had been forwarded

direct from Whitehall to meet him, by special messenger. He sighed as he saw it, and said: "They are beforehand with us, Lamia; I have been worked to death in town —I cannot stand it. But now to supper."

We accordingly turned into one of the small, low rooms, which had been a guard-room, now a library, where we found supper prepared by Duval, who was in attendance. No sooner there, however, than with a restlessness which was of late become habitual to him, he cried: "But I must first show you your own apartment, where I have prepared a surprise for you which you little dream of."

With characteristic impatience, Helvellyn

then seized a light, and going before me, led the way to a low door in the corner of the hall, which opened into a steep, narrow, winding staircase, which we ascended.

"From this tower," said he, opening a lancet window, "you may scan the wide expanse of ocean, and descry the distant shores of Mona. Those headlands to the right and left, now blazing with bright bonfires, in honour of Lamia, Lady Helvellyn, are the boundaries of your view, and of my estate. Now," added he, opening a side-door, "enter, and survey your own private—most private domicile."

We entered a bed-room, large, low, and gloomy, wainscoted with oak, and hung

with old tapestry; the bedstead was carved oak, and surmounted by plumes of white feathers, which gave it, to my mind, a funereal appearance. The bed-curtains were dark velvet, lined with white silk; the toilet, draped with old point lace, bore a silver mirror, and chased silver boxes, and stood near a little door leading to the dressing-room, which was furnished with taste and comfort. The boudoir lay beyond, fitted up in an antique style, with old, very old cabinets, of monstrous heavy shape, and chairs of most Gothic pattern.

The rooms down stairs were all paved with tile, and, in truth, did not wear an air of perfect comfort; but this, my apart-

ment, was all boarded with black oak, on which were spread small, soft carpets, and a fire of wood blazed on the ancient hearth, beneath a most monumental-looking chimney. Why then did I give an involuntary shudder as I said to myself: "This is my home!"

Helvellyn, fondly drawing me to the fire, pointed to a veiled picture hanging over the mantelpiece, and said:

"Here is my surprise; I know that, of all mortal beings, until now, you have most dearly prized and cherished with sincere affection the original of this portrait. Are you prepared for it?"

He held the string attached to the veil

which hid the painting, but did not conceal the handsome modern frame, which confirmed me in my expectation of beholding my beloved father's portrait. So, with my hands clasped, and saying: "I guess—I know—the dearest, best friend of my youth is there!" I bid him draw the veil.

Never shall I forget the next moment; judge of the pang that wrung my heart, and stung Helvellyn to the quick, when, the veil being swiftly drawn aside, we beheld the lovely, innocent features of Gwyneth, in all her youth and happiness before us. There she stood, looking down, as if from heaven, upon two guilty creatures, her sworn or pretended friends, who now stood

where she last had been happy. I felt as if the scene of the conservatory at Dresden was to be acted anew, and expected her to step down and upbraid her betrayers. I looked but once, and for a moment, but I saw her in her pretty Welsh hat, and cap, and red shawl, as a lively mountain-girl, full of youth and lightness of heart: her Welsh welcome was written in gold, underneath with a translation: "Welcome to this, my house, to you that come in the name of the Lord."

How killing is it when the artless speak to those who are conscious of duplicity! Her smiles, her joyous, innocent expression did speak to me more forcibly than words,

and to him too. I burst into a flood of tears, but a dagger was in my heart. I fell into his arms; he soothed me with words, spared no invective on Duval for his mistake, and tried to restore me to myself. Impossible, my rest was gone. And when I heard his dear, soft voice, and raised my face, bathed in tears, to meet his well-known, dove-like eyes, what was my horror to perceive that, while his lips uttered nothing but honeyed words, his eyes flashed fire; the loving tone of his voice, the smooth accents of his tongue were belied by the rage depicted on his countenance. I had seen that fearful expression once before, and had never forgotten it.

Suddenly, he suspended his caresses, and, with a more composed manner, insisted on returning to supper. Here I was forced to silence. Sick at heart, I could not speak, over-fatigued and worn out, I could neither eat nor drink; Helvellyn, thirsty with emotion, swallowed glass after glass alone of the rich burgundy placed before us. From time to time he muttered the name of Duval. His manner flurried and wild, alarmed me, deeply though my heart responded to the impassioned tenderness of his love. At last, for the second time, he conducted me to my chamber, where he left me to look over his despatches, as he said, but with little calmness for business written on his brow.

I found Eloise and Marie waiting for me, evidently aware that something had happened. The portrait of my dear father now occupied the place originally intended for it, but in which the other, by mistake, had been inconsiderately suspended.

His portrait was there indeed, but it had lost its charm. Not even my father's benign and affectionate countenance had power to restore my peace of mind. A sense of indescribable oppression conquered all my endeavours to shake it off, the spirit of Gwyneth was there, waiting invisible for retribution. There stood the white plumed bed, the gloomy tapestry; this was, doubtless, the bridal chamber of the ill-fated Gwyneth; the two maids stood still, afraid of

their own voices: pale and silent, they seemed evidently to dislike their new baronial residence.

I soon dismissed them. Oh! how I wanted sympathy—how I longed for Valérie, my faithful Valérie, to whom, in part at least, I could open my mind.

I sat by the gradually sinking embers, listening to the March winds howling about my casement, and hearing from time to time the steps of the retiring household. At length I heard only the storm. I sought not my couch, I could not sleep. I thought over the past; I trembled. I fancied I saw the figure now of Gwyneth, now of Iris, now of you, Henry. I need not describe my burning

thoughts. At last, wearied with bodily and mental fatigue, I threw myself on the splendid couch as if I were mounting a funeral car, whose plumes nodded over the dead. I dozed, I dreamt : my spirit, quite worn out with feelings of remorse and horror, took suddenly another and a happier turn. I thought nothing had happened, that had happened; I thought that Helvellyn was mine, lawfully and honestly mine, from the beginning, and should be to the end; I was not guilty, I was the good Lamia; I had deceived nobody, all was as it should be; I had my beloved Helvellyn, and what was the world besides? Happy thoughts of love—but how fitful! how feverish!—at last came,

and I was sinking into something like slumber, when I was roused by one long, loud scream ringing through the castle, its unearthly violence shook every fibre of my frame; there was no possibility of doubt . . . it was death . . . it was murder . . . .

I sat up listening, shuddering with fright; all was hushed in silence, the wind blew with redoubled violence. Again I lay down, wondering at Helvellyn's delay. But now, indeed, I dreamt a fearful dream, or rather, my senses being confused, but my eyes open, I fixed them on the picture. It was now again Gwyneth: it lives, it moves, it stands beside me: it is not Gwyneth of the Welsh hills, . . . it is the Gwyneth of the con-

servatory at Dresden. With a pale, solemn look she turns towards me, points to a lifeless, new-born babe lying on her bosom, Helvellyn standing by in the gloom. The phantom placed one hand, cold as death, upon me, irresistibly dividing me from Helvellyn. To him I turned, beseeching, imploring, but I was dumb, speech was taken from me. I saw his face, distorted with the demoniac expression, a thousandfold more dreadful than before, the cold hand grasped me tightly, when another unearthly shriek, such as I had heard before, recalled me to consciousness of existence. But, oh! what an existence, worse than death, the loss of happiness on earth, grief and sorrow for the remainder of my days.

A demon face, which I could scarce recognise for his, glared on me with wild, lustrous eyes; a cold and bloody hand, armed with a rapier, held me in mortal grasp; I saw the features of my lover, my husband, my Helvellyn, not the beauty of my love, but distorted with maniac frenzy, scowl on me with the eyes of a basilisk. He screamed frantically: "My bride, my bride! to heaven or hell, where she no more shall trouble us!" Seizing me by the hair, he dragged me from the bed, and stabbed me twice in the neck.

In a convulsion of despair, I succeeded in freeing myself from his grasp, and flying to the door, where my screams had by this time

assembled some of the astonished domestics. Seeing help at hand, my exhausted strength failed me, and I fell.

I remember nothing more for a long time after that dreadful night; Heaven in its mercy rendered me insensible to what followed, as well as to the explanation of the horrid scene, which I only learnt on my recovery.

It seems that my excited and unhappy husband, overworked by business, gnawed by stifled remorse for his treatment of poor Gwyneth, madly in love with me, and at the moment heated with wine, had become furiously enraged with his servant Duval on account of the careless mistake by which the

portrait of the unfortunate Gwyneth had been placed in my room instead of that of my father. His previous tendency to derangement was not then known to me, but I had long noticed with pain his increasing restlessness and susceptibility, particularly since Dresden. His anger on this occasion gave but the vent to the burning fever which had been accumulating, perhaps for years; and his temper, once excited, knew no bounds. He had left me almost in a state of frenzy, had attempted, without success, to fix his mind to the papers that had arrived for him, had started up, raving, from his desk, seized the rapier of Glendower, and rushed upon the luckless Duval, who was waiting in the

ante-room. A minute sufficed to sheath the ancient weapon in the victim's breast, whose last screams, joined to the vociferous ravings of my.... God! I can go no further; you know the rest. He came, he knew me not, he saw me not; he saw the vision of the murdered Gwyneth: he would have killed me for Gwyneth in his madness, as in his reason he had killed Gwyneth for me. Yet not *he*: *I* was to blame.

By a singular fatality, but a merciful one, my father was spared all knowledge of these calamities. You arrived two days afterwards with the news of his death from paralysis. Happy, happy release! You found the castle in a state of confusion not to be described.

You, with exemplary kindness, forgetting and forgiving my past conduct to you, took me back to Rainham Abbey.

There I lay long in a painful and almost unconscious state: on my recovery, I found my father was no more. He had not lived to hear the account of that dreadful tragedy, nor to see his afflicted daughter at once the cause and the victim of it. Yes, I spare not myself; and it was the great aggravation of my misery, that in all my sufferings my conscience could not absolve me from the charge of having been the first cause of this series of domestic crimes and misfortunes. My father, in happy ignorance of the catastrophe, had left his whole fortune, with blessings, to me

and to Helvellyn. My precarious health was greatly alleviated by the unceasing care of Valérie, to whom, by this great change of circumstances, I was now unexpectedly restored. I was, after a time, recommended to go abroad, my unfortunate husband being quite beyond all chance of profiting by any care or attention of mine; and after securing to him all that skill and watchfulness could do for him in his wretched state, I left England for the continent, accompanied only by Valérie

I left Eloise and Marie, not being able to support the sight of any witnesses of our tragic scene at Caer-Wynn. My heart was ever in Helvellyn's cell. I was from time to

time informed of his condition: I learnt that his reason never even for a moment returned; that he raved about Glendower's sword, and mentioned both mine and Gwyneth's name, but unconnectedly, not as remembering any part of what had actually happened. I would have seen him before I quitted England, but it was absolutely forbidden by the physicians.

Having, by my father's death, succeeded to the title of Baroness Rainham, I felt justified in taking that title, both by inclination and circumstances, in preference to that of Helvellyn. The story, of course, became known, but my name, as altered, attracted no attention.

Ever restless, ever miserable at heart; a widowed wife and wedded maid, I wandered through much of the continent, and settled finally at Venice. My health, shattered by all I had undergone, and worked upon by the nervous agonies of mind to which my too vivid memory unceasingly exposed me, was gradually deteriorated, and I made that the pretext for living entirely after my own fancy. Sometimes I secluded myself entirely from the world, sometimes I took pleasure in assembling around me all the talent which Venice afforded, either in the arts or philosophy; at others, attended only by Valérie, I threaded the mazes of Venice, explored the most intricate canals in a modest gondola,

and sought sometimes the picturesque scenes of historic interest, sometimes the abodes of the poor, whom I relieved.

Eventually I heard that my manner of life gave rise to strange surmises, not always very favourable to me. I cared not; the world of Venice were welcome to think what they thought, and to whisper what they invented; I had gone through too much at home to be sensible to minor inconveniences. I made excursions to the *terra firma*, to the islands, to the coasts of the Adriatic, even to the classic shores of Greece; everywhere seeking rest, but finding none; amusing for a time my intellect, but never satisfying my heart.

In one of my excursions I met Prince Demetrius again on his travels. He had heard some portion of my luckless story, but after the natural and unavoidable inquiries which he made in all the sincerity of friendship after my husband, he had the tact and good feeling not to press the curiosity which he certainly felt any further. I allowed Valérie to give him, in private, a short sketch of the causes which led to my travelling, without entering into details; this was sufficient to satisfy him that all allusion to them must be disagreeable.

Prince Demetrius, however, proved a useful friend to me; his conversation, always gentleman-like and frequently instructive, was a

resource to my wandering thoughts: since he had determined on voluntarily quitting Russia for ever, and fixing himself in Italy or France, his mind had gained a degree of freedom upon all subjects, especially politics, to which it had been previously a stranger. He had lived so much among the English that he could no longer endure Russia where, like all the best of his countrymen, he was *mal vû à la Cour*.

Some years passed in this unobtrusive manner. The result was, that I gained, by a quiet and habitually regular mode of life, a degree of mental repose, that I had not anticipated, though my health never recovered its pristine vigour. Simple absence

from scenes of excitement, or localities which have deeply influenced our fate, is often the only remedy for the wounds of the heart or conscience, though never a perfect one. This I felt more poignantly every year; there were certain days in which, in spite of all endeavours I could make by the distractions of art or travel, the researches of science or antiquity, I could never banish the recollection of the horrors of which they were the anniversary. Then, whatever my occupation, or whatever reasoning I tried to bring to my aid, pangs of mind and body would torture me till I almost longed for death.

One only charm there was which was strong enough to calm my torments, and to

dispel the evil thoughts which despair and remorse would crowd upon my brain; but my shattered nerves would not always allow me to employ it. That charm was music, to which I had more than ever attached myself, and in which, with tears in my eyes, I often confessed that I found the prophecy of Iris come true. It was my purest, my only consolation; wearied of the world, unhappy in mind, and suffering in body, it was in music alone that I found distraction a relief.

Such had been my life for some years, when I unexpectedly received the news of my wretched husband's death. To lament him, under the circumstances, was impossible; he had exchanged a life of woe for one in which,

if pardon be granted for sins the chief cause of which was incipient hereditary insanity, pardon might be his. Yet no woman learns the death of one she has truly loved without a pang of sorrow not to be alleviated by time or distance. I felt it, as if he was still the fine, noble object of my admiration, still the admirable Helvellyn of the court, the senate, —of my love. I grieved for him as though there had been a chance of his recovery and restoration to me, as though his faults had never been known to me, or had never existed.

I shut myself up for some time, in total solitude; and then, as it was necessary to take some steps, and my health was and is

daily more precarious, I resolved to return to England.

Prince Demetrius again, on hearing of my change of condition, ventured to propose marriage to me. I declined his proposal, always ready to consider him a sincere friend, but nothing more.

My departure was instantly decided on; when one is in mental distress, the thoughts of home, of the friends and scenes of our youth, if once admitted, soon turn the scale. If death came soon, and it was often in my thoughts, I would die by the graves of my father, my mother, and my sister.

I have long been writing this confession

for you, Henry; I shall have but little mor to add to it.

My reflections on the journey homeward were sombre. I made a sad, but searching, review of my past life and adventures. I scarcely looked to the future. Illness, and the bitter cup I had drunk in my short career, made me loath even to guess at what was to come. I was deadened to hope—experience had poisoned all hope.

With but low sense of religion, except the religion of the heart and feelings, I found myself now cured of all love of the world. I retained only some feeling of affection for your excellent character. I knew you to be my friend—my stern, rough, but uncompro-

mising friend; and you were now my only relation. With feelings less blunted than mine then were, I might even have thought again of being your wife, could you pardon my duplicity towards you.

The result of my long and serious self-examination was, that I discovered I had actually succeeded in every object I had in life, but always through some shade of guilt or treachery: that my objects, and other pieces of what the world calls good fortune, when attained, had brought me—not happiness, but misery: finally, that after having embittered the life of my sister, and hastened her death, after succeeding to her title and fortune; after betraying my confiding and

ingenuous friend, I had succeeded in possessing myself of her husband; after having treated you with a hypocrisy and duplicity unworthy of a woman and a Christian, I had lost my husband's society, your esteem, and destroyed the very existence of my sister and my friend.

At length my last trial is over. My conviction of the vanity of human wishes is complete. I had scarcely written the words—scarcely committed to paper the avowal of my still lingering dream of happiness, however fleeting, in becoming your wife, when intelligence reaches me that you are actually married.

I will not conceal—nay, I am bound to

confess, that this was a finishing blow to me. For one moment—one moment only—a rising feeling of my ancient and besetting sin, jealousy, boiled within my breast; I had for an instant the inclination, not the actual intention, to return quickly to Rainham, in order to sow mischief between you and your youthful—to me, unknown—bride. But no, I have stilled the rising storm—I have quelled that vicious movement of my woman's heart. Better and worthier thoughts now prevail; you have now nothing to fear, Henry, from me or my malice. The faint idea of injuring a new-born happiness, which I could not enjoy, was a wicked impulse, even too bad for me; I rejected it with loathing, as soon

as thought. I resolved to do one good deed before I died, and if health would allow me to press my journey home, to see you and your wife, whom I was now as ready to love as before to hate, and to give you such blessing as it might be permitted to a sinner like myself to invoke from Heaven in your behalf.

The first step towards fully unburthening my mind, has been to finish this confession, which I have long laboured at, intending it as a full avowal of my faults towards you and others. I place it in your hands as my sole surviving friend, and in taking this, my last and solemn leave of you, I pray God to bless your union with your fair and gentle Emma.

Adieu, Henry, for the last time; should I ever see you more, it will be but to leave this my last and sincere confession in your hands. I feel the grave closing over me; and whatever be my fate in another world, I beseech you, I implore you, to remember, in your prayers, the unhappy Lamia.

CHAPTER XI.

"As when a man has been cut off by sudden death, we are anxious to know whether his previous words or behaviour indicated any sense of his coming fate, so we examine the records of a state of things just expiring, anxious to observe whether, in any point, there may be discerned an anticipation of the great future, or whether all was blindness and insensibility."—DR. ARNOLD, LECTURE III.

HENRY LUCY closed the last page of this melancholy memorial of human weakness and misplaced talent, with a feeling of sorrow

not to be described. He had always had a sincere and devoted affection for his cousin, and often had he wished and endeavoured to be serviceable to her by counsel and example; but their characters were too dissimilar to allow him to reap the success he merited. Lamia was not only widely different from Henry in disposition, but also in temper and education: she prized and admired what he could not even esteem; and that diversity of tastes acted as a tacit reproof of her principles, which Lamia's high spirit could not bow to. Otherwise, either respected the other's heart and talents in no common degree.

For an hour Henry mused in deep silence over the manuscript, which remained fixed in

his hand. His wife coming into his study, roused him suddenly; the only words he spoke, were: "Poor Lamia!" and putting the paper away carefully in a place of security, he accompanied his beloved Emma into her own sitting-room. He told her the heads of his cousin's sad story, and they lamented her in silence and in tears.

The last offices were performed by Henry, who would depute to no indifferent person a task of which he felt the responsibility. His mind, ever anxious and self-condemning, prompted him, by an over-strict survey of his conduct, to accuse himself of having abandoned Lamia too readily at a moment, when patience on his part, and a steady

maintenance of the rights which her acceptance had given him, might have saved her from her ill-starred marriage with Helvellyn, the subsequent catastrophe, and the miserable, restless years which followed it. Henry followed Lamia to the grave, almost alone.

Yet not quite alone, for the truly attached companion of Lamia's youth and life, the only confidential friend, whose quick intelligence and active mind comprehended her feelings and supported her wayward temper, Valérie, would not remain absent from the tomb of her whom she had cherished from infancy.

One more, and that an unexpected mourner, though a sincere one, was seen

to arrive at the last moment, and, his face concealed by his ample black cloak, to join the funeral procession, unbidden, but not unobserved.

This was no other than the Prince Demetrius, who had been long and deeply attached to her, whom he now followed to her early grave.

Sad it was for the old people in the village, who remembered the birth and growth of the whole of this promising family, to witness the dark ceremony which consigned the last of the name to her long rest in the chapel of Rainham. That Abbey had seen, within a few years, the tombs of father, mother, and two sisters successively arise to

commemorate the death of the entire last generation of a noble and ancient family. This was its final extinction.

Lamia, anxious to do the little good that remained in her power at the moment of quitting this world, had, with a strength of mind which she had not always been mistress of, made a carefully considered will. She bequeathed Rainham Abbey, with all her landed property, to Henry and his heirs: the whole of her personal fortune (subject to a large legacy to her physician, Dr. Schuler, pensions to her servants, and bequests to hospitals at Venice) was left to Valérie, to her whose attachment to Lamia had been so amply proved, though her influence, through difference of character, had not always had

the best effect upon Lamia's natural eccentricity of disposition.

Henry and Emma settled themselves in Rainham Abbey, anxiously awaiting the birth of their first child. Emma being in a precarious state, owing to the trying scenes to which she was exposed, previous to Lamia's death, the infant, probably from these causes, died prematurely soon after its birth.

They continue to lead a calm, useful, and religious life, bringing up several children, who were afterwards spared to them, in the fear of God, and in strict religious principles; profiting by the melancholy warning afforded by the defective education of their gifted, but unhappy cousin.

She lies in the chapel, between her mother and sister: on her grave-stone is placed, by her own wish, merely a simple cross, with the words, "*Lamia implora pace.*" By the side of that grave Henry often prays; his character becomes graver and sterner, and, though good and excellent, he can never be considered as a happy man.

That the human mind is full of contradictions and inconsistencies, is so trite an observation, that nothing but its constantly recurring truth, as seen in all the varied forms which surround us, can render it, as a fact, worthy of our notice. But worthy it certainly is of deep attention and study, when incongruities and contrasts, such as

were presented by the character of Lamia, are united with her talents and fervour of disposition. So thought Henry, who, knowing her from her youth, and deeply sensible of her good qualities as grieved at her failings, had watched the awful departure of an erring soul from this earthly theatre of outward show and inward sorrow, with anxiety aggravated by doubt. Doubts he certainly had, of the most painful sort, not as to the sincerity, but the completeness, of Lamia's repentance. At the last hour when no questions can be asked to any good purpose, and if asked, only give useless pain; when the simplest form of doctrine or instruction can neither be explained nor

understood; all Henry could do was to believe her penitent expressions, and to recommend her soul to mercy in his prayers. And earnestly he prayed that he might hereafter find some corroboration of his favourable impressions, as to the state of inward religious feeling in which the unhappy Lamia departed.

His joy then may be conceived, on discovering among her papers, that Lamia had latterly devoted her best talent, and, as he afterwards was enabled to judge, with consummate success, to set forth, with all the power of music, that signal instance of the mercies of her Redeemer as exemplified in the Magdalen.

He found the following argument prefixed to a nearly finished sacred symphony or oratorio on the subject, which, of all others, best combines heavenly love with the most abject earthly humiliation, and which most powerfully unites the deep abasement of the sinner with the consolations of religion vouchsafed to the humble penitent.

SANTA MARIA MAGDALENA.

A MUSICAL POEM.

THIS composition naturally divides itself into three parts, the first and last shorter than the middle one, from which they are respectively divided by a peculiar change in the character of the music, as explained farther on.

I. MADDALENA ERRANTE.

The First Part opens with a tumultuous and confused chaos of abrupt passages

figuring the wild revelry of boisterous mirth and riotous passion, like the irregular commencements of some of Beethoven's compositions, or the false gaiety of parts of the Freischütz, of the Walpurgisnacht, and of the priests of Baal and their demoniac strains in Elijah: "Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—PSALMS.

All this is suddenly interrupted by a long, sweet, sad note, piercing like a trumpet from heaven through the wild orgies of unholy mirth and stormy passion, to which it puts a sudden stop; and continuing on the same, after the manner of the celebrated long note in Elijah, it sinks gradually

into the plaintive and pathetic character of penitential melody.

" Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"

MILTON.

II. MADDALENA PENITENTE.

Here begins the middle and principal part of the composition. The wail of the sinner, the torments of self-reproach, the desire for repentance, the abject misery of mind of her who is conscious of sin, but knows not how to pray; the abasement and degradation of the lately proud and beautiful woman, would be expressed in varied measures of doleful and sorrowing music, till ending in a

burst of bitter grief and despair, it sinks into a death-like silence. This will recall the style of Bach, of the penitential Psalms, of the Sistine Chapel.

"A broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise."

III. MADDALENA TRIONFANTE.

Then the Third Part opens with another long note, like a voice from heaven, of similar awakening character to that before, only that instead of sinking into a penitential strain, it gradually swells into a high, encouraging tone of hope and consolation, till like a ray of light from on high, it seems to open

the kingdom of heaven to the repentant sinner:

"Come unto me ye that travail and are heavy laden, I will give you rest." She seems lifted by the voice of God from the lowest abyss of humiliation and mental agony into the realms of bliss, while now choirs of angels break into lofty hymns of celestial harmony, proclaiming forgiveness and absolution, and call the *Pardoned* to her place among the blessed. Here would such spirits as Handel and Mozart display the sweetest warblings of their heavenly melodies, ending in a chorus of triumph declaring to the universe the joy of Heaven over even one sinner that repenteth. "Though

your sins be scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

Thus, the conclusion (and finest thing) in Faust:

"Margaret . . . . . *is saved!*"

THE END.

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